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TWO

LETTERS

TO

THE REVEREND MOSES STUART;

ON THE SUBJECT OF

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

By BERNARD WHITMAN.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY GRAY AND BOWEN.

1830.

BV774
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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.....*to wit:*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the ninth day of December, A. D. 1830, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Gray and Bowen, of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, *to wit:*

"Two Letters to the Reverend Moses Stuart; on the Subject of Religious Liberty. By Bernard Whitman."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned"; and also to an act entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned'; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JNO. W. DAVIS,
Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

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LETTER I.

Reverend Sir,

In your Letter on Religious Liberty, you accuse Dr. Channing of publishing certain charges against orthodox Christians. You quote several passages from his writings to substantiate your accusation. You then bring together the substance of his charges in the following sentences. "You have charged the orthodox with a settled, steadfast, unrelenting purpose to suppress all free inquiry respecting matters of religion, to cover with reproach those who may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace. In addition to all this, you represent them as saying; — Since argument is insufficient to produce uniformity of opinion, recourse must be had to more powerful instruments of conviction, to *Ecclesiastical Courts*." Having given this summary, you utter the following positive and solemn declarations. "*I do know that the accusations which you stand pledged to support are not true. I aver that they are not, before heaven and earth.*"

Now, my dear Sir, permit me also to express my honest convictions on this question. For I presume you will admit, that I have an equal right with yourself, to publish Letters on Religious Liberty; and an equal right, with any orthodox Christian, to utter solemn asseverations. I therefore aver, before heaven and earth, that I firmly *believe* the above charges to be substantially correct, when applied to the leaders of the orthodox denomination in our country, against whom they were *specially* directed. And to give you and the public the *honest reasons* for this belief, is the design and object of the present publication.

I address you as the head of the orthodox party, because you seem to me to have assumed that character in your Letter to Dr. Channing. These are your own words. "All, against whom I suppose the denunciations in your works are *specially* directed, I have the pleasure of being more or less acquainted with; and I know well their feelings and views." I am sure no other orthodox divine can justly advance an

equal claim to preëminence. I shall therefore say *you*, when I refer to the proceedings of your aggrieved brethren. As you have spoken freely concerning unitarians, you will not object to my using great plainness of speech in relation to the measures of the orthodox. I shall faithfully endeavour, not to please unitarians or trinitarians, liberal or orthodox; but to speak boldly what I honestly believe to be the truth, and the exact truth. I do not write as a unitarian, or an advocate for unitarianism; but as a Christian, and an advocate for Christian freedom.

That I may not be misunderstood, I will give a definite statement of the proposition which I shall endeavour to demonstrate. It may be expressed in the following terms. THE MEASURES ATTEMPTED AND ADOPTED BY THE LEADERS OF THE ORTHODOX DENOMINATION IN OUR COUNTRY, FOR THE PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION OF THEIR PECULIAR VIEWS OF RELIGION, ARE SUBVERSIVE OF FREE INQUIRY, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF CONGREGATIONALISM. By *free inquiry*, I mean, that every man may investigate the subjects of religion, without any fear of evil consequences from human power or persecution. By *religous liberty*, I mean, that every man may believe and publish and propagate, in a Christian manner, his honest religious opinions, without any fear of human authority or punishment. By *the principles of congregationalism*, I mean, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the right of private judgment, the advancement of the Reformation, the independency and equality of congregational churches. A plain statement of facts will now be given in proof of my proposition.

I. USE MADE OF HUMAN CREEDS.

In the first place, I invite your attention to the use made of human creeds by the orthodox denomination. I think the facts I shall adduce under this head will prove the two following and distinct propositions. First, that the orthodox denomination make a human creed, and not the Bible, their standard of religious truth. And, secondly, that the use made of human creeds by the orthodox denomination is subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but six different classes of facts under this general division.

1. *Theological Seminaries. First.* Look at the use made of a human creed in orthodox theological seminaries. Take the institution at Andover as a fair illustration. Before you could be admitted into the office of Professor, you were obliged to express your hearty belief in all the statements of the following human creed.

"I believe that there is one and but one living and true God; that the word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only perfect rule of faith and practice; that agreeably to those Scriptures, God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; that in the Godhead are three *persons*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these

Three are One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; that God created man after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; that the glory of God is man's chief end, and the enjoyment of God his supreme happiness; that this enjoyment is derived solely from conformity of heart to the moral character and will of God; that Adam, the federal head and representative of the human race, was placed in a state of probation, and that in consequence of his disobedience all his descendants were constituted sinners; that by nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and that previously to the renewing agency of the Divine Spirit all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God; that, being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation; so that, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; that God, of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, and that he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of this state of sin and misery by a Redeemer; that the only Redeemer of the elect is the *eternal Son* of God, who for this purpose became man, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever; that Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a Prophet, Priest, and King; that agreeably to the covenant of redemption, the Son of God, and he alone, by his suffering and death, has made atonement for the sins of all men; that repentance, faith, and holiness are the personal requisites in the gospel scheme of salvation; that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of a sinner's justification; that this righteousness is received through faith; and that this faith is the gift of God; so that our salvation is wholly of grace; that no means whatever can change the heart of a sinner, and make it holy; that regeneration and sanctification are effects of the creating and renewing agency of the Holy Spirit; and that supreme love to God constitutes the essential difference between saints and sinners; that, by convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds, working faith in us, and renewing our wills, the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of the benefits of redemption; and that the ordinary means, by which these benefits are communicated to us, are the word, sacraments, and prayer; that repentance unto life, faith to feed upon Christ, love to God, and new obedience, are the appropriate qualifications for the Lord's supper; and that a Christian church ought to admit no person to its holy communion, before he exhibit credible evidence of his godly sincerity; that perseverance in holiness is the only method of making our calling and election sure; and that the final perseverance of saints, though it is the effect of the special operation of God on their hearts, necessarily implies their own watchful diligence; that they, who are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification;

adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits, which do either accompany or flow from them; that the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; that their bodies, being still united to Christ, will at the resurrection be raised up to glory, and that the saints will be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity; but that the wicked will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and, with devils, be *plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever*. I moreover believe that God, according to the counsel of his own will, and for his own glory, hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and that all beings, actions, and events, both in the natural and moral world, are under his providential direction; that God's decrees perfectly consist with human liberty, God's universal agency with the agency of man, and man's dependence with his accountability; that man has understanding and corporeal strength to do all that God requires of him; so that nothing, but the sinner's aversion to holiness, prevents his salvation; that it is the prerogative of God to bring good out of evil, and that he will cause the wrath and rage of wicked men and devils to praise him; and that all the evil, which has existed, and which will for ever exist in the moral system, will eventually be made to promote a most important purpose under the wise and perfect administration of that Almighty Being, who will cause all things to work for his own glory, and thus fulfil all his pleasure."

Now, Sir, you will acknowledge, that this creed was manufactured by frail, fallible, prejudiced mortals. You will also admit, that scarcely an article of the whole can be expressed in Scriptural language. You will likewise grant, that many of the most learned and pious Christians have rejected the peculiarities of this human formulary as unchristian. Should a prayerful perusal of the sacred writings lead you to an open denial of the truth of any one of these articles, you must lose your situation as Professor. Now which is made your standard of religious truth, as a Professor, this human creed, or the Bible? The creed, surely. For should you refuse to profess your belief in all its statements, you could not be inducted into the office of Professor. And should you refuse to renew your assent every five years, you must be dismissed from the Seminary; although you should firmly adhere to the Bible, and offer to express your belief in the very words of inspiration, and continue to exhibit a Christian temper and character.

And is not this use of the human creed subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? For, what inquiries have you liberty to pursue? Would you inquire into the truth of your creed, so as to correct any errors that may pertain to this human composition? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You must never presume to make a single alteration in this human formulary; but you and your successors must sacredly use it as the

perfect standard of religious truth FOR EVER. For so you are bound to conduct, by the following authoritative injunction from the constitution of your seminary. "It is *strictly* and *solemnly* enjoined, and *left in sacred charge*, that *every* article of the *above said creed* shall *for ever* remain *entirely* and *identically* the same, without the *least* alteration, addition, or diminution." — Would you inquire into the meaning of the Scriptures, so as to communicate to your pupils the result of your investigations? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You have bound yourself most firmly to make your religious instructions conform exactly to the sentiments of the human creed. These are the words of your solemn obligation. "And furthermore I do solemnly promise, that I will open and explain the Scriptures to my pupils with integrity and faithfulness; that I will maintain and *inculcate the Christian faith, as expressed in the creed, by me now repeated.*" — Would you inquire into the peculiar religious opinions of other Christian denominations, so as to ascertain if their belief is not founded on the plain teachings of inspiration? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. You have pledged yourself to regard the sentiments of other sects as erroneous, and to defend your creed in opposition to all who dissent from any of its articles. These are the words of your sacred oath. "And furthermore I do solemnly promise, that I will *maintain* and inculcate the Christian faith, *as expressed in the creed, by me now repeated—in opposition* to Papists, Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Sabellians, Unitarians, and Universalists, and to *all other heresies and errors, ancient or modern.*" — Should a prayerful study of the Bible enable you to discover a slight error in some one article of this long creed, could you retain your situation as Professor? No. This liberty you have sacrificed. The moment you advance in religious knowledge and truth one step beyond the ideas of this human formulary, you must vacate your office; you must be cast on the wide world with a dependent family; you must encounter coldness and frowns and reproaches from your former associates; you must be privately and publicly denounced as an apostate, a heretic, an infidel; and above all, you must be sentenced to endless torments for your honest preference of the teachings of revelation to the articles of a human creed, if treated as others have been who have embraced unitarianism. These are the words of your constitution. "The preceding Creed and Declaration shall be repeated by *every* Professor on this foundation, at the expiration of every successive period of five years; and *no man shall be continued a Professor on said foundation, who shall not continue to approve himself a man of sound and orthodox principles in divinity,* AGREEABLY TO THE AFORESAID CREED." Sir, is this the way you show your respect and reverence for the Bible? Is this the way you divest yourself of all party prejudices, when you proceed to search the Scriptures? Is this the way you prepare yourself to

investigate religious subjects with honesty, and boldness, and fearlessness? Is this the way you enjoy the meridian splendor of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism?

But perhaps you will aver, that there is no possible danger of your ever dissenting from the sentiments of this human creed. Then why all these fortifications? And have not many divines, as wise, as learned, as honest, as pious as yourself, been led, by a patient and prayerful study of the Scriptures, to renounce their belief in the peculiarities of your standard of religious truth? Is it not a fact, that one of the principal founders of your institution, one of the principal framers of this very creed, and one of the earliest Professors in your seminary, became a Liberal Christian after dissolving his connexion with your theological faculty, and warmly opposed to many of your illiberal and exclusive measures? Is it not a fact, that several ministers, who pursued the regular course of theological studies in your institution, and who were regarded as amongst the most talented, the most learned, the most sincere, the most pious of your students, have since embraced unitarian sentiments? Is it not a fact, that several others, of high standing and good Christian character, were led to renounce orthodox views, even before they had completed the usual term of education in your seminary? Is it not a fact, that many of the most distinguished unitarian preachers of the age were once as zealously orthodox as you now are? Is it not a fact, that every year witnesses the conversion of more or fewer orthodox ministers to the unitarian faith? And could you be placed in similar circumstances, what would prevent similar results? I do not mean to insinuate that you are knowingly influenced by your peculiar oaths and obligations to make the Scriptures bend to the articles of your creed. But I must be permitted to declare, that almost all earthly motives, which can operate on the human heart, combine to make it your interest to find none but orthodox views in the Bible. And I must further aver, that I am unable to conceive of a situation, more unfavorable to free inquiry and religious liberty, than the office of Professor in orthodox theological seminaries.

2. *Admission to Churches. Secondly.* Look at the use made of human creeds in admitting members to orthodox churches. Let a person apply to one of your churches for admission; let him relate the most satisfactory experiences; let him declare his unwavering belief in divine revelation; let him offer to express his peculiar views of religion in the very words of Scripture; let him exhibit undoubted evidence of virtue and piety, — and would you admit him to the privilege of church membership? No; you would exclude him from the Lord's table, unless he would first profess his hearty belief in all the articles of a creed; a creed, made by erring, imperfect, polluted mortals; a creed, scarcely an article of which can be expressed in Scriptural

language; a creed, which many of the wisest and most pious Christians have pronounced erroneous. Some of the best Christians in the country have been refused admission to orthodox churches, because they could not honestly subscribe to the human standard of truth.

Here then is a notorious fact. No person can be admitted to many orthodox churches, unless he will first assent to the articles of a human formulary of faith. I say no person, and I mean to be understood in a literal sense. Yes; let our blessed Saviour himself appear among his followers; let him conceal from observation his miraculous powers; let him exhibit the same character as when preaching the gospel in Judea; let him apply for admission to the church in your seminary; let him offer to express his articles of faith in any words used by himself when on earth; let him refuse to subscribe your very peculiar human creed, and would you admit him to your communion? I ask this question with unfeigned reverence. I answer it with horror and shuddering. But I speak the words of truth and soberness when I declare, that if you acted consistently with your present practice, you must exclude him from your church. Yes; your adored Saviour would not be permitted to approach that feast of love, of which he is, or ought to be, the sole Master; he could not be received into that body of disciples, of which he is, or ought to be, the only Head; he must be driven from that company of subjects, by their own unauthorized regulations, of which he is, or ought to be, the only acknowledged Lawgiver! Is this making the Bible, or a human creed, your standard of religious truth? The creed, surely. For no man can obtain admission to your church, unless he will profess his hearty belief in all the articles of a long human creed; although he adheres most firmly to the Bible, and is willing to express his belief in the words of his Saviour, and exhibits evidence of Christian holiness.

And is not this use of human creeds subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? Just notice the actual operation of this unchristian measure in our community. Look at those parts of our land in which unitarian churches are not yet established. In almost every orthodox society you find individuals who are prohibited from the Christian ordinances by this unauthorized usurpation. They consider themselves to be Christians. They have studied the word of God as faithfully and prayerfully as their neighbours. They exhibit as good evidence of conversion as the admitted professors. They earnestly desire to have their beloved offspring initiated into the school of Christ by baptism. They ardently wish to commemorate the dying love of their ascended Lord. They are ready to acknowledge their belief in the Bible, and their determination to make it the standard of their faith and practice. They cannot honestly assent to the articles of the human creed, because they cannot find them supported by revelation. They are persons of as much influence,

usefulness, respectability, and goodness, as any in the place. No objection to their moral and religious character is made by the orthodox church. They are persons whom you would be proud to admit to your communion, if they would only give their assent to your human creed. They are persons whom you would glory in pointing out as orthodox believers. But no; having set up a golden image, you must make them bow down to your idol, or you will deprive them of the Christian name, rights, and privileges. You are willing they should enjoy liberty to think as you do; but the moment they refuse assent to your interpretations of Scripture, you deny them access to the Christian ordinances. And by what authority? You indeed have a perfect right to say who may sup at your private table. You may also frame creeds to exclude, from your board of refreshment, members of your own household, friends, and strangers. But from what source do you obtain your right to drive sincere believers of good character from the Lord's table? Is not this feast his own? Has he not given out his invitations? Does he not entreat all, who feel qualified, to come and partake freely? Has he commissioned you to stand at the door, and examine the claims of all candidates for admission? — to try their qualifications by your human standard? Has he not rather given definite instructions for the regulation of his own supper? If any come without a wedding garment, will he not execute the threatened punishment? Has he authorized you to beat some, and stone others, who come in compliance with his invitation? In so doing, do you not often deprive as worthy Christians as yourself of their equal and inalienable rights; the rights of free inquiry and religious liberty? I put these questions to the consciences of all concerned.

3. *Excommunication from Churches. Thirdly.* Look at the use made of a human creed in excommunicating members from orthodox churches. Let it be known that one of your church members has renounced his belief in some of the articles of your human formulary, and he will be called to an account for his honest opinions by the church to which he belongs. Perhaps he will not even be allowed on trial to give the Scriptural reasons for his change of sentiments. He will be commanded to renounce his heretical opinions, or suffer the consequences. Now he can no more renounce his belief in a doctrine of revelation, without evidence of its falsity, than he can create a world out of nothing. He is accordingly denounced as a heretic, and publicly excommunicated from the fellowship of the church. And for what crime is this severe punishment inflicted? Has he been guilty of any immoral or unchristian conduct? Nothing of the kind is alleged. He has indeed obeyed Jesus Christ; and prayerfully searched the Scriptures; and readily embraced what appeared to be the true meaning of the sacred writers; and openly acknowledged his honest belief. Yes; this he has done; and this is all, for which orthodox churches have repeatedly

excommunicated some of the most perfect Christians of this period. Is this making the creed, or the Bible, the standard of religious truth? The human creed, surely. For the member is excommunicated for his departure from the articles of the creed; whilst his accusers must admit that he still makes the Bible his only standard of faith and practice, and exhibits as much evidence as before of real virtue and piety.

And is not this use of the human creed subversive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism? Just notice a very common circumstance in the case. In the season of a religious excitement, persons of very little religious knowledge are induced to join your orthodox churches. They surely cannot acquire a very accurate understanding of the Scriptures, during the short period that intervenes between their supposed conversion and their admission to the ordinances. On their entrance to the church, they are obliged to profess their hearty belief in all the articles of a human creed, some of which they do not pretend to understand, and none of which, perhaps, they have ever examined. After their admission, they are sometimes, not always, exhorted to study the Bible, and make that the standard of their faith and practice. They perform this duty conscientiously; and some of them are unable to find any authority for a belief in the human articles to which they have assented. The more they examine, the stronger their convictions become, that the leading doctrines of orthodoxy cannot be found in the Scriptures. In this predicament, what must they do? One of three things. They must either acknowledge their dissent from the orthodox standard of truth, and thus subject themselves to severe reproach and persecution, and even open excommunication; or they may confess, as two zealous promoters of orthodoxy have lately confessed, that the plain language of Scripture was unitarian, but their *feelings* inclined them to favor orthodox preaching, and thus make their feelings a standard of inspired truth; or they may do as many members of orthodox churches now feel compelled to do, — conceal their real sentiments in their own bosoms, dread the inquiries of their neighbours, bend under their heavy burden of spiritual servitude, and pray for the approach of that day, when all true disciples shall enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. Is this granting your church members the enjoyment of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the rights of congregationalism?

4. *Dividing Churches. Fourthly.* Look at the use made of a human creed by the orthodox in dividing congregational churches. As a fair illustration of this measure, take the case which lately occurred at Wilton, New Hampshire. In the year 1778, the first church in Wilton adopted a creed somewhat orthodox in sentiment. In the course of the next year, the communicants, probably seeing the evils of a human standard, passed the following liberal vote: "That every candidate, previous to his admission, give his consent to a confession of faith, or exhibit one

of his own, or a relation satisfactory to the church." Under this catholic regulation, members were occasionally admitted. But in 1803, a creed, not materially differing from the former, was again adopted; the former vote, however, was not rescinded, so that the same terms of admission were still enjoyed. In 1823, a minority of this church felt aggrieved, because new members were admitted without being compelled to subscribe the human creed. This is the sum and substance of their complaint, as must be evident to all who will read their documents. They requested the majority to unite with them in calling a mutual council to settle their difficulties. The majority considered their complaints unreasonable, and accordingly refused to comply with their request. The minority proceeded to call an *ex parte* council of orthodox divines, among whom were your friends, Drs. Church and Edwards. After long deliberation, they came to the conclusion, that the minority had sufficient cause of grievance, and would be justified in forming themselves into a new church, unless they could bring the majority to a compliance with their demands.

But let us have the very words of this council of congregational ministers. "How can they [the minority] see the introduction of a creed, and the way laid open for the introduction of an indefinite variety of creeds, subversive of the gospel of Christ, and not be aggrieved?—The council are therefore led to say, *First*, That it is their unanimous opinion, that all the members who hold to the confession of 1803, and feel aggrieved with essential deviations from it, not only have a right, but are under solemn obligations, to obtain for themselves and for their families the enjoyment of the preaching and the ordinances of the gospel, in accordance with that confession. But if they cannot obtain those privileges while they remain connected with those who have occasioned their present difficulties; then, *Secondly*, It is the opinion of the council that they are bound to seek the enjoyment of these privileges in some other way. But if it be needful for the aggrieved to be disconnected from them, then it is the opinion of the council, *Thirdly*, That it is more expedient for the aggrieved to remain in a body, with such others as may join them, and enjoy among themselves, as they may be able, the preaching and ordinances of the gospel, than to seek admission to sister churches."

Now this strikes me as one of the most remarkable cases ever recorded in the annals of congregationalism. Just look at a plain statement of the leading facts. Here is a minority of a congregational church; they are aggrieved because the majority will not restore a human creed, which they have outgrown and cannot believe, to be the standard of truth for the admission of future members; aggrieved because they cannot shut the doors of the church against all who will not adopt their interpretations of Scripture. They accordingly assemble a body of congregational divines to give advice under this difficulty; and

this learned body consider their grievance so serious and weighty, as to advise them to secede and form a new church, unless they can compel the majority to surrender their most sacred rights and privileges. How perfectly uncongregational. Is this making the creed, or the Bible, the standard of religious truth? The human creed, surely. For the minority are advised to separate, unless the majority will adopt a human creed, which they cannot believe, as their standard of Christian truth; although they still adhere to the Bible, and give all persons an equal right to interpret the Scriptures for themselves. And surely I need not ask the question, if such a measure be subversive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism.

5. *Exclusion of Ministers. Fifthly.* Look at the use made of human creeds by the orthodox in excluding from their fellowship ministers of their own sentiments. As a fair illustration of this measure, take the proceedings of the orthodox synod at Baltimore. The circumstances are briefly these. The Rev. Mr. Duncan of Baltimore, a distinguished orthodox divine, was invited to preach the annual discourse before the students in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. In his sermon he spoke slightingly of human creeds, and urged the young men to make the Bible alone their standard of faith and practice. These remarks were not relished by the Rev. Dr. Miller, the Principal of the institution; and at the opening of the next term, he took occasion to deliver an introductory lecture on the utility and importance of human creeds. Mr. Duncan soon published a work on the subject of creeds, setting forth their origin and pernicious tendency. For this offence he was summoned before the delegates of the synod. His trial lasted several days. Being unable to make him renounce his error, or, in reality, place the human creed before the Bible, they excommunicated him from their body, and declared his pulpit vacated. But his own church, to whom alone he was amenable, disregarded this act of clerical usurpation and dictation.

Now if this transaction had not taken place within the last ten years, and if the documents were not before the community, more than one half of the people would disbelieve so remarkable a statement. They would aver, that such a measure was too great an outrage upon common sense, to say nothing of religion, to have been perpetrated in this enlightened age, and in this land of boasted freedom. And is this making the Bible, or a human creed, the standard of religious truth? The creed, surely. For this able and eloquent divine was publicly excommunicated from the orthodox denomination, because he would not acknowledge the utility and supreme importance of human creeds; although he still adhered firmly to the divine standard, and retained his Christian character, and even his orthodox sentiments. It would be an insult to ask any man if such a proceeding was consistent with religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregational churches.

6. *Voting for Ministers. Sixthly.* Look at the use made of human creeds in depriving the proprietors in orthodox churches of the right of choosing their own ministers. A few words of explanation are necessary to make this most daring act of orthodox usurpation fully intelligible to the community. Some few years since the leaders of the orthodox party became alarmed at the rapid progress of unitarianism. They saw the majority of one congregation after another electing unitarian preachers. They wished to raise some barrier to the spread of liberal views, and also to devise some measure to prevent all the meeting-houses from falling into unitarian hands. They adopted the plan of *trust deeds*, as a happy expedient for effecting both objects. Their operation is in this manner. A church is erected with orthodox funds. The pews are offered for sale as usual. But the purchaser is informed, that no proprietor will be allowed to vote for the minister until he has professed his hearty belief in the articles of a human creed; but that every pew-holder must be taxed for the support of the ministry. He is further informed, that the control of the building is vested in the hands of certain orthodox trustees, who belong in part to other societies and who will furnish the minister, whenever the proprietors refuse to subscribe the human creed. The trustees are to have full power to fill all vacancies in their numbers, so that the church may remain in orthodox hands to all eternity, if orthodoxy should live so long.

Here then is a notorious fact. The leaders of the orthodox party have lately bound down several churches in Boston and other parts of this Commonwealth by trust deeds, so that the pew-owners are obliged to support the preacher, but are denied the right of voting for the man who is to instruct them and their children in religion, unless they will first assent to the articles of a human creed. Is this making the Bible, or a human creed, the standard of religious truth? The creed, surely. For let a man purchase a pew in a trust-deed church, and come under obligations to aid in the support of the ministry; let him adhere firmly to the Bible, and exhibit a Christian character; still he cannot be allowed to vote for the minister he must maintain, unless he will first profess his hearty belief in all the articles of a long human creed.

And is this use of human creeds consistent with free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? Would a similar measure, in relation to our political rights, be called consistent with civil liberty? Just suppose a parallel case. Suppose that a majority of our Representatives, at the next session of the General Court, should be Federalists. Suppose they should frame a political creed, in which should be embodied the peculiar opinions of the Federal denomination. Suppose they should enact a law, that, hereafter, no man should be allowed to vote for the Governor of the state, until he had professed his hearty belief in all the articles of this human creed. And,

in order to keep the office in Federal hands for ever, suppose they should convey the political rights of all, who will not comply with this condition, into the hands of twenty Federal trustees in neighbouring states, giving them power to fill all vacancies in their numbers, and to elect the Governor of this Commonwealth, whenever her citizens shall refuse to subscribe the Federal creed. Suppose the time should soon arrive, when no Federal individual could be found among our voters. Then all, who contributed to the support of our public officers, would be obliged to look to the trustees in neighbouring states for a Federal Governor. Would the people have any civil liberty remaining? Would not the man be pronounced insane, who should propose such a wicked system?

But have not the leaders of the orthodox party done precisely the same thing in relation to the religious rights of the people. At this very time, not one in ten of those, who occupy your trust-deed churches, can be allowed to vote for the minister he is obliged to maintain. And when the children of those, who can now conscientiously subscribe the human creed, shall come upon the stage, is there any probability that they will embrace precisely the same opinions as their fathers'? Is there no progress to be made in religious knowledge? Is the orthodox world now to become stationary for the first time? If not, if the children, with their improved advantages, should become wiser than their fathers, they could not honestly assent to all the articles of their fathers' human formulary. And, unless they do thus assent, they must either look to orthodox trustees, in other societies, to furnish them with a preacher they dislike, or dispose of their property in the house at a dead loss. Is it not truly wonderful, that people are so ready to discover any infringement of their *civil* rights, while their *religious* rights may be wrested from them without exciting scarcely a murmur or complaint? I am happy, however, to learn, that very few individuals have been found, so lost to all sense of self-respect; so recreant to the spirit of republican institutions; so ready to confess their incapacity to select their own religious teachers; so subservient to their creed-signing neighbours; and so regardless of that liberty wherewith Christ has made his disciples free, as to purchase pews which are fettered by the unhallowed restrictions of trust-deeds. And I firmly believe, that even these few, after the present period of high party-excitement shall have passed, will assert their rights, burn their creeds and trust-deeds, vote for their own ministers, and no longer sacrifice to the ambition of a few leaders the principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism.

I have room for no more facts under this head. What, then, must be our conclusion? In the first place, do not the facts, which I have stated, fully prove, that the orthodox denomination make a human creed, and not the Bible, their standard of religious truth? If not, take

simply one extract from a standard periodical journal of your denomination, which plainly asserts this principle. Here it is. "It can be, we think, shown, that, in the present state of the world, the *Bible is not* and *cannot* be used as the *sole test* of *orthodoxy*, while *any* regard is paid to *truth* in the constitution of a Christian church." I presume this declaration will be sufficient for the satisfaction of every man. In the second place, do not the facts, which I have stated, also fully prove, that the use made of human creeds, by the orthodox denomination, is subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? If not, take simply one extract from the writings of your excellent friend, Dr. Miller, which fully implies this conclusion. Here it is. "The *Calvinistic articles* of the church of England were the means of keeping her doctrinally pure, to a very remarkable degree, for the greater part of a hundred years. In the reign of James the First, very few opponents of Calvinism *dared publicly to avow their opinions;* and of those who did avow them, *numbers were severely disciplined, and others saved themselves from similar treatment by subsequent silence and discretion. The inroads of error therefore were very powerfully checked, and its triumphs greatly retarded* by these PUBLIC STANDARDS." This is the Doctor's argument for the utility of public standards, or human creeds, in our country; so that those, who dissent from them, may be *severely disciplined*, and others avoid similar treatment by being hypocrites. This is enough to settle the question. I must conclude that both propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

II. MINISTERIAL INTERCOURSE.

In the second place, I invite your attention to the orthodox terms of Ministerial Intercourse. I think the facts I shall adduce, under this head, will prove the two following distinct propositions. First, that the measures adopted by the leaders of the orthodox denomination, for preventing ministerial intercourse with unitarians, are oppressive, tyrannical, and unchristian. And, secondly, that these measures are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but five different classes of facts under this general division.

1. *Misrepresentation. First.* Look to the misrepresentations, which orthodox individuals have invented and circulated, to prevent ministers of their own sentiments from exchanging with unitarians. Take a notorious instance which occurred about two years since. The circumstances are briefly these. The Rev. Mr. Hubbard, a minister of acknowledged orthodox sentiments, and late pastor of the church in Middleton, was invited to a re-settlement over the congregational society in Lunenburg. It was generally known to his ministerial brethren, that he was in the practice of exchanging with unitarians. This circumstance *alone* induced some orthodox preachers in the vicinity of

Lunenburg to make great exertions to prevent his installation. And what measures do you suppose they adopted to effect this object? I grieve for the iniquity of the individuals concerned, while I record their wicked transactions. They went to Andover, and earnestly solicited from the orthodox ministers in the neighbourhood of Middleton some information derogatory to the character of Mr. Hubbard. False and slanderous reports were invented by an individual in Middleton, communicated to an orthodox minister in Danvers, and conveyed by him to the principal agent in this unrighteous work. The Rev. Mr. Payson of Leominster, having obtained the desired misrepresentations, went into Lunenburg, communicated them to an influential family, and requested them to put them in circulation and conceal the name of their informer. He affirmed, that Mr. Hubbard was a bad man, brought up his children to swear, and would prove a curse to the society if they retained him as their pastor. Such reports now threw the parish into consternation, and reached the ears of the pastor elect. He proceeded immediately to the source of the evil, and eventually dragged to light the individuals concerned. By the terrors of the civil law, he compelled them to confess their wickedness and agency in the base undertaking.

I will now give you a copy of three confessions. Take first that of the Rev. Mr. Braman of Danvers. It will show you that he was earnestly beset by orthodox ministers for information injurious to the reputation of Mr. Hubbard. Here it is. "Whereas, *in consequence of earnest solicitation from clergymen in the vicinity of Lunenburg*, I made statements of reports which were injurious to the character of Rev. Mr. Hubbard; I hereby declare, that from persons in Middleton who belonged to the society of which Rev. Mr. Hubbard was pastor, in whose veracity I have entire confidence, I have received free testimonials of his moral and ministerial character; and that having been at considerable pains to make inquiries, I now declare it to be my conviction, that all rumors prejudicial to his moral reputation are destitute of foundation, and I hereby express my *sincere regret and sorrow*, that I was *the instrument* of circulating the reports in question."

Take next the confession of the Rev. Mr. Payson, who went into Lunenburg to circulate the slanderous reports. He was afterwards asked before witnesses, if he should have taken such a step, had not Mr. Hubbard exchanged with unitarians. His answer was — No. He also intimated, that Mr. Putnam of Fitchburg and Mr. Fisher of Harvard, in connexion with himself, had taken Lunenburg under their special protection. Many other particulars of a similar character might be mentioned to his disadvantage, did my limits or inclination permit. Let us then have his confession. "This certifies to all whom it may concern, that some time during the month of October last, from

information received from a person in whom I confided, I made certain statements to Edmund and Elizabeth Proctor of Lunenburg, and to some other individuals, unfavorable and derogatory to the ministerial and moral character of Rev. Ebenezer Hubbard, now pastor of the congregational church in Lunenburg; which statements have been ascertained by my informant to be false and groundless, of which evidence has been presented to me; therefore, on the ground of this evidence, I do now declare my belief that the said statements are false and groundless. And I further declare my sincere regret, that any statements made by me, from misapprehension, *or any other cause*, though I would not implicate any one individual, should have been magnified into public reports injurious to the private character of Rev. Mr. Hubbard, which I have no wish to impeach, and in regard to which I know nothing injurious or derogatory."

I will, lastly, give you the confession of the orthodox gentleman in Middleton, who originated these slanderous reports. As he writes like a true penitent, I shall withhold his name from the public; for I have no wish to injure his reputation, and I trust his own conscience will inflict the most severe punishment for such aggravated wickedness. Here it is. "Be it known to all whom it may concern, that I have, during the year last past, been circulating reports that are highly injurious to the moral and ministerial character of Rev. Ebenezer Hubbard, late minister of this town. I have made statements dishonorable to him and his children, to ministers and other individuals, with whom I have been conversant. I now freely acknowledge and publicly declare, that the statements made by me at any time, and to any person, against Mr. Hubbard's character, are false and groundless, unprovoked and slanderous; and I take this method to make public my sorrow and regret, that I *have labored* to injure a man who never injured me, and whose moral character and conduct, I have reason to believe, as far as my knowledge extends, has been correct. I also further declare, that I never heard Mr. Hubbard's children use profane language. *Middleton, April 24th*, 1829."

Now is not this a most aggravated instance of misrepresentation, originated and executed by orthodox individuals to prevent a minister of their own sentiments from exchanging with unitarians? Just remember the leading circumstances. Here is an orthodox minister of good reputation; he is surrounded by a family of young and dependent children; he has no means of subsistence but the income of his professional services; he is on the eve of settlement over a united society, who wish him to continue his practice of exchanges with unitarians. At this moment, a neighbouring orthodox minister enters the parish, visits one of the most influential families, solemnly assures them that their pastor elect is a bad man, and will prove a curse to their society, — desires them to put the slanderous reports into immediate circulation, and carefully

to conceal the name of their informant. The whole church are in dismay. What to do they know not. And had not Mr. Hubbard pursued the business with the coolness of an innocent and injured man, and with the decision of a Christian parent and freeman, he would have been utterly ruined as to all worldly prospects, and perhaps reduced even to beggary. And all this wicked contrivance for what cause? Simply because he exercised an independent ministry; simply and solely because he would exchange with unitarians. If such measures are not oppressive, tyrannical, and unchristisn, I know not the meaning of the words. And if they are not subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism, I know not what measures can be. Other instances of misrepresentation by orthodox individuals, for similar objects, though of a more private and recent character, have come to my knowledge, but must be omitted for want of room.

2. *Threatening. Secondly.* Look at the threatenings used by the leaders of the orthodox party, to prevent ministers of their own sentiments from exchanging with unitarians. Take an example of recent occurrence. The circumstances are briefly these. A unitarian minister of Salem, in company with an influential layman of Andover, called on an orthodox minister of Middlesex county, to obtain an exchange for the following Sabbath. As the orthodox minister had before preached in Salem, he addressed to him the following observation: "I hope you are not getting into the exclusive system." The reply contained the following sentiments, according to the testimony of the layman, now before me. "I *abhor* the *system*, but am *compelled* to enter into it; for THEY have told me, if I do not join them, *they will fall upon me and break up my parish.*" The layman immediately repeated this very appropriate proverb: "The fear of man bringeth a snare." And so it has proved. Here you perceive, that an orthodox minister honestly confessed his abhorrence of your exclusive system, and his forced compliance with it from fear of the execution of your threatenings. I do not now mention the name of this individual, because I would not expose him to any more severe pain, than I believe his conscience has already inflicted.

This is but one of many similar instances. I mean, that many are deterred from exchanges with unitarians by the various threatenings of your leaders. About two years since, one of the very zealous and exclusive ministers remarked of the orthodox minister of Pepperell, that he doubted his piety, because he exchanged with unitarians; that *they* were laboring to prevent him from so doing, and that they should persevere until their object was accomplished. I have lately heard that this object is accomplished, that this man has surrendered his independence to his clerical brethren, that they *have broken him down*, as they term the result of their various measures. When your leaders

have not been able to gain their ends by threatenings, they have put their threatenings in execution. Take the proceedings in Gloucester as a fair illustration of this assertion.

Now do you imagine that the public will long submit to this priestly dictation? Will parishes much longer suffer their ministers to be frightened by orthodox leaders from exchanging with unitarians? Will they not rather assert their own rights, as well as the rights of their pastors? And in order to manifest their independence, will they not require a continuance of liberal exchanges? Yes, Sir; you may depend, that the orthodox ministers who are now deterred from ministerial intercourse with unitarians by your threatenings, will ere long be released from their servitude. They will be aided and supported by public sentiment in the maintenance of their individual and congregational rights. They will be protected in an independent course by the voice of a free people. And orthodox leaders will be made to realize, that such threatenings are oppressive, tyrannical, and unchristian; and also subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

3. *Oppression. Thirdly.* Look at the oppression practised by the leaders of the orthodox party, to prevent ministers of their own sentiments from exchanging with unitarians. I allude particularly to the exclusive rules adopted by the majorities of some ministerial associations. In all parts of the Commonwealth, there are more or fewer orthodox ministers who are perfectly willing, if we may believe their own words, to exchange with unitarians. They openly aver, that they can see no good, but much evil, resulting from the exclusive system; that there is common ground enough on which to hold ministerial intercourse with unitarians; and that so far as they are themselves concerned, they have not the least objection to such a course. They also declare, that they are prevented from exchanging with unitarians, by the regulations of their orthodox brethren, who have agreed to exclude from their associations, their ministerial fellowship, and their Christian sympathy, all who will not conform to their laws on the question. Several instances of such confessions have come to my knowledge. I will merely refer to the conversation of one orthodox minister in Middlesex county. When speaking on the subject of exchanges with a neighbouring unitarian minister, and afterwards with one of his parishioners, he uttered the sentiments I have recorded. Is not this acknowledging, that the usurpations of his clerical brethren prevent him from exchanging with unitarians?

And does not this confession fully establish the usurpation of the leaders of the orthodox party? What right have a majority of an orthodox association to adopt rules which shall oppress the minority? Yes; *oppress* the minority! For if they exchange according to the dictates of their judgment and the wishes of their hearers, the

majority commence their measures of persecution, first by excluding them from the association; next, by refusing to acknowledge them as Christian ministers; and finally, by breaking up the harmony of their parishes, and destroying their peace, usefulness, and reputation. Will the community allow such usurpation of ministerial and congregational rights much longer? No. Let them utter their opinion on this subject with distinctness and authority; and loud as seven thunders. In this way they may put down this unholy combination of orthodox leaders to regulate the exchanges of their brethren; a combination oppressive, tyrannical, and unchristian; a combination subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

4. *Concealment. Fourthly.* Look at the concealment which has been practised by orthodox ministers in relation to ministerial intercourse. I allude particularly to those cases, in which orthodox candidates have obtained settlements over comparatively liberal societies, by concealing their real theological sentiments, and their real views respecting exchanges with unitarians. So many cases of this nature are at hand, that it is difficult to make a selection. I will refer to an instance of late occurrence in Middlesex county. The circumstances are briefly these. The society was small in numbers. They occupied a house of worship owned principally by unitarian proprietors. A large majority of the voters were of unitarian sentiments. They were scarcely able of themselves to support a minister properly. A wealthy orthodox individual in the neighbourhood offered to contribute a generous sum annually, provided the society would settle a man of orthodox views; but was perfectly willing he should exchange with unitarians. Such an one was at length obtained, who preached practical discourses principally, and manifested a willingness to be liberal in his ministerial intercourse. The call was given and accepted. The council was invited from unitarian as well as orthodox churches, and parts assigned indiscriminately to ministers of both denominations. Before the vote was taken to proceed to the ordination, one or two unitarian ministers wished to know distinctly, whether the pastor elect would exchange with persons of their opinions. One or two orthodox ministers objected to his giving an answer to such a question. At length, one of the council from Andover rose and observed in substance, that he was well acquainted with the opinions and wishes of the society, and that the pastor elect was also perfectly informed on this subject; that he likewise understood the different views of the members of the council, and was *authorized* by the pastor elect to say, that he should pursue such a course in relation to exchanges as would give satisfaction to every member, and that he was present and would signify if he dissented from this statement. A unitarian delegate observed, that he presumed the Andover preacher had authority for what he stated, as the pastor elect was present and confirmed it by his silence; and

that *if he was sincere* in the declaration, he supposed it would be satisfactory to the whole council. With such an express understanding he was ordained. He continued for a year or more to preach practical sermons, and to exchange occasionally with unitarian ministers. But a new system of operation was commenced, by changing or altering the covenant of the church, and by treating on doctrinal and controversial subjects. Then a refusal to exchange with unitarians was given to one and another requesting the same. At length the following memorial was addressed to him by about thirty of his parishioners; a very important portion of his society, since but six individuals voted for his settlement and seven for his salary; not but that the others were satisfied with his discourses and his promised liberal course of exchanges, but they feared the concealment which had been so often practised by orthodox ministers in similar circumstances.

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"We the subscribers, members of your society, would respectfully represent, that we feel disappointed and aggrieved by the course pursued by you in respect to the exchange of ministerial labors the year past. We had fondly hoped that you would have extended that Christian charity which characterized the commencement of your pastoral labors. And we sincerely hope you will, upon consideration of the situation of the society, so far gratify us, as to resume the course in that respect which you pursued at your settlement. The object of this request is, to keep our little society united; for we fear a different course will produce divisions among us, which will weaken and disturb the harmony of the society. With sentiments of respect, we are your friends and parishioners. January, 1830."

And what kind of an answer do you suppose one of your pupils returned to this respectful communication? The most jesuitical letter I ever read. One of the most distinguished legal gentlemen in this country observed on reading it; 'This document *might* have been written by a lawyer, but *should never have come from the pen of a minister.*' As it occupies four closely written pages, I shall have room only for the conclusion. Here it is. "You will perceive, gentlemen, that I have given four distinct answers to the memorial which you have presented to me. First, that I cannot understand from the language of the subscribers the real cause of their dissatisfaction, nor the remedy which they wish me to apply. Secondly, upon supposition that they wish me to exchange with unitarians, a compliance with their wishes would not prevent the division which they fear. Thirdly, that individuals have no right to alter the contract which the church and society entered into with me at my settlement. And, fourthly, that no one should presume to control my exchanges, until he can share with me the weight of my responsibility." Now this very document furnishes much evidence of this man's concealment of his real

intentions when ordained. And one further fact will confirm this conclusion. It is this. Just before this memorial was presented, he was asked by a baptist clergyman, what success attended his labors. He replied, that he now considered himself as firmly settled over an orthodox church as any minister in the region. Do not all the facts in the case seem to indicate an artful and deep-laid plan, to bring a unitarian church and society upon orthodox ground? I verily hope this is the last instance in which a liberal society will have their expectations disappointed by orthodox preachers.

5. *Orthodox Reasons for not exchanging with Unitarians. Fifthly.* Look to some of the reasons assigned by the leaders of the orthodox party for not exchanging with unitarians. This system of exclusion was commenced in Connecticut as early as 1806. That year the general Association of the state recommended to the ministers to withhold fellowship from any clergyman who should deny the divinity of Christ or the atonement. This was probably done in reference to the Rev. Mr. Sherman, who embraced unitarianism about that period. But no reasons were assigned by the association for this exclusive measure. In this commonwealth various reasons have been assigned. One small class pretend that their consciences will not permit them to exchange with unitarians. Now it appears to me, that if I had embraced Calvinism, and really believed a portion of my hearers must be inevitably damned, my conscience would have come to an opposite decision. I should have felt so much pity for those who were foreordained to endless torments, that any thing I could have done for their happiness during their few remaining days, would have been cheerfully performed. And if they had desired to hear a preacher, who should declare to them that God was a Father of *all* his children, my conscience would have prompted me to comply with their wishes. But there is no accounting for the decisions of conscience; and therefore I will not attempt to reason on the subject.

Another class pretend that they cannot exchange with unitarians, because they are responsible for the sentiments delivered from their pulpits. I can inform such how they may easily rid themselves of this heavy burden of responsibleness. One of their number has set the example. He informed his people, that he would comply with their request to exchange with unitarians, provided they would take all the responsibility on their own shoulders. They called a parish meeting, and voted to take the responsibleness of their minister's exchanges with unitarians on their own heads. This is a happy expedient. I advise all those ministers who give this reason for continuing in the exclusive system, to make the same proposals to their parishes the approaching spring; and I have no doubt they will be relieved of their weighty load of responsibleness.

A third class pretend that their societies are opposed to their ex-

changing with unitarians. If a majority are opposed, no fault can be found with the minister; for he is accountable on this question only to his God and his people. But if one or a few bigoted individuals undertake to control the minister, it becomes the majority to assert their rights. I would certainly wish every people to act their pleasure on this subject. I have no wish to dictate to any minister in relation to his exchanges, and I surely am not to be controlled in mine by any minister or body of ministers. What I am contending against, is this unhallowed combination of a few orthodox leaders, by which many ministers of their own sentiments are brought into utter servitude. This is felt and understood by some among themselves; and a few are bold enough to expose the iniquity of the leaders. As a specimen, I will give you a paragraph, written by the Rev. Mr. Withington, of Newbury, a distinguished orthodox divine. Had it been published by a unitarian, I have no doubt you would have pronounced it gross slander. But it will confirm all my statements under this division; and coming from high orthodox authority, must be unanswerable.

"To illustrate our manners, if ever this book should fall into the hands of a foreigner, let me mention in a note, a circumstance which is certainly unworthy of a place in the text. In Massachusetts, for a few years past, all ecclesiastical measures have been prepared *in a certain conclave*, nobody knows who they are, or where they are, invisible beings, *congregational cardinals, to whose decrees every orthodox clergyman and church is expected to pay unlimited deference and submission.* But as they are wholly destitute of power, they have found out a singular way of executing their laws. *The clergyman, who hesitates,* OR DARES TO THINK OR ACT FOR HIMSELF, suddenly finds himself surrounded by the whisper, that he is becoming an UNITARIAN. It is not easy to conceive the horror and dismay, that this suggestion occasions. It is caught from mouth to mouth, and whispered from ear to ear, and every ghastly relater increases the terrors of the tale. The poor, affrighted victim must either return to the bosom of the church, *the popular measure of the day, or be denounced a heretic,* worthy of all the flames that detraction can kindle; for, in this country, we burn heretics in no other. I will only add, that this state of society is rather amusing; to say nothing of the magnanimity of the GREAT MEN, who condescend to use such weapons, it is singular enough to see to what useful purpose the unitarians may be put; they not only serve as whetstones, on which staunch polemics may sharpen their weapons, but they make excellent bugbears to keep naughty boys in order. O the follies of the wise!"

Now this is a truly wonderful paragraph, as coming from one of the orthodox ministers of this Commonwealth; and true to the very letter. It also confirms every statement I have advanced, and must receive the confidence of all independent orthodox Christians. What then must

be our conclusion? Do not the facts I have stated fully prove, that the measures adopted by the leaders of the orthodox party to prevent ministerial exchanges with unitarians, are oppressive, tyrannical, and unchristian? Do they not also fully prove, that these measures are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? I must conclude that both propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

III. Ecclesiastical Tribunals.

In the third place, I wish to direct your attention to the various ecclesiastical tribunals of the orthodox denomination. I believe the facts I shall adduce under this head will prove the two following propositions. First, that the leaders of the orthodox party have attempted to establish, and in several instances have actually established, ecclesiastical tribunals, so that the supposed errors and mistakes of ministers and private Christians might be tried and punished as heresies; that is, as crimes. And secondly, that such tribunals are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but five different classes of examples of this description.

1. *Consociations established. First.* Look to the consociations of churches in Connecticut. In each county, all those churches so disposed form themselves into a consociation. The power of settling all ecclesiastical difficulties is thus surrendered by the individual churches into the hands of the consociation. Delegates from county consociations form a general, State consociation, to which appeals may be made, in certain cases, from the county consociations. These consociations claim the right of calling ministers and private Christians to account for their honest opinions, and of punishing them for their religious sentiments. I will mention one of the many cases, in which a consociation has exercised its usurped, tyrannical, and unchristian power, in trying and punishing a most exemplary and devoted Christian minister, for his supposed mistakes and errors.

Take the case of the Rev. Abiel Abbot. In 1795, he was ordained over the church and society in Coventry. After fifteen years' happy and successful ministry, he was visited by a majority of the male communicants, because a few of them had expressed dissatisfaction with his peculiar religious sentiments. Like an honest and innocent minister of Jesus Christ, he gave them an explicit statement of his views of the gospel; and expressed a willingness, if they were dissatisfied with his ministry, to have his pastoral connexion dissolved. On the thirteenth of September, 1810, the church voted, that as their pastor neither preached nor believed certain doctrines, which they allowed were incomprehensible and could not be expressed in Scriptural language, it was expedient to apply to the association of ministers in their county, for advice. The association advised them to take the regular

measures for convening the council of the consociated churches in the county of Tolland. To this Mr. Abbot objected. For he knew nothing about any such body as a consociation; and if one existed, he certainly could not feel himself amenable to their usurped authority. He expressed, however, a perfect readiness to submit their difficulties to a mutual council; the congregational mode of adjusting disputes between pastor and people. The church wished to follow the advice of the association; but the society objected, and wished for a mutual council. The church would not consent to a mutual council, unless the members should be expressly invited, not to hear and give advice respecting their troubles, but to dissolve the pastoral relation. This would be in fact surrendering every ministerial right to the disaffected church. To this, neither Mr. Abbot nor his society could honorably submit. Accordingly, a body of clergy assembled in Coventry on the sixteenth of April, 1811, calling themselves the Consociation of Tolland County; and forthwith summoned Mr. Abbot to answer before them on the charge of heresy.

The Rev. Abiel Abbot appeared before this self-constituted ecclesiastical court, not to acknowledge their right or power to call him to account for his honest religious opinions, but to protest against their usurped authority. He advanced the most convincing and conclusive arguments to prove, that he was not amenable to their tribunal. Still they heeded no remonstrance. They were resolved upon his condemnation. They proceeded with his trial in opposition to his consent. And what were the charges preferred against this religious criminal? The three following. "That the Rev. Abiel Abbot does neither preach nor believe the doctrine of the sacred Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the Godhead. That he does neither preach nor believe the divinity of Jesus Christ; that he is both God and man united in the Person of Mediator. That he does neither preach nor believe the doctrine of the atonement made for sin by the blood of Christ, and of the justification of sinners by the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to them, and received by faith in him." Such were the weighty accusations. These charges were substantiated by satisfactory evidence. "The general question was then put, Is the Rev. Abiel Abbot *guilty* of the facts alleged in the complaints of the church against him? Voted unanimously in the affirmative." Then comes the dreadful sentence of condemnation. Before I record this expression of orthodox intolerance, which must remain an everlasting disgrace to this self-constituted court, let me observe, that a more peaceable, studious, sincere, humble, righteous, and pious Christian minister was not then to be found within the borders of that state. Now let us have the concentrated wrath of the consociation of Tolland county. "*Voted, that the man who neither believes nor preaches the doctrines specified in the articles of the charge,* IS DISQUALIFIED FOR THE OFFICE OF

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY; FOR HE HAS ESSENTIALLY RENOUNCED THE SCRIPTURES, HAS MADE SHIPWRECK OF THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS, HAS DENIED THE MESSIAH OF THE GOSPEL, WHO IS THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE, AND CANNOT PREACH TO SINNERS, ACCORDING TO THE REAL MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES, JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED, WHO IS THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION, NOR FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH HE HAS PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."—"*And they hereby declare, that the ministerial relation between the Rev. Abiel Abbot and the first church of Christ in Coventry ought to be, and is, dissolved. And they do hereby revoke the commission given to him by his ordination to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances of the same.*"

Can you believe, that such are the proceedings of some twenty distinguished orthodox Christians, in this period of the world and in this enlightened portion of our country? I must confess, the fact would surpass my belief, if the evidence was not before my eyes. And is not this calling a worthy minister to account for his honest opinions, and punishing them as heresies, that is, as crimes? Can a minister of the gospel be guilty of a more heinous offence in the estimation of the Christian public, than renouncing the Scriptures, denying the Messiah, making shipwreck of the true faith, and disqualifying himself to preach either to saints or sinners? Can you inflict a punishment more severe on a conscientious preacher of Jesus Christ, than to make the community believe, that such accusations are really true? But this is not the worst of the case. This outrageous deed was sanctioned, the next year, by the whole body of orthodox clergy in Connecticut. Yes; at a meeting of the General Association of the state, the following resolves were presented by the Rev. Doctors Dwight and Beecher, and unanimously adopted by the body. "Res. IV. *That in the late proceedings at Coventry, the elders and churches in Tolland county have, in the opinion of the General Association,* BORNE A JUDICIOUS, FAITHFUL, AND HIGHLY COMMENDABLE TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS. Res. V. That, according to the firm belief of this General Association, *a denial of the* DEITY *of Christ is heresy.* Res. VI. THAT THE EXCLUSION FROM CHRISTIAN COMMUNION, AND FROM THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE, FOR HERESY, IS NEITHER AN ATTEMPT TO BIND THE CONSCIENCE IN MATTERS OF FAITH, NOR A VIOLATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY; *but an act which that charity imperiously demands; and an* ARTICLE *of* DISCIPLINE, *which the* PRINCIPLES *of agreement among the consociated churches require them to perform.*" To me it is truly incredible, that the whole body of orthodox clergy could have passed such resolutions only eighteen years since; and resolves, too, drawn up by Dr. Beecher, and doubtless sanctioned by your own vote. We here perceive most sensibly our danger. You pronounce this conduct of the consociation, *judicious, faithful, and highly com-*

mendable. Had you Connecticut gentlemen the power, there can be no doubt but you would perform deeds of the same judicious, faithful, and highly commendable character in Massachusetts. There can be no doubt, that you would depose all unitarian ministers forthwith, and pronounce upon them the same sentence of condemnation and exclusion, although a majority of their congregations should wish them to remain. But thanks to Almighty God, Connecticut ministers do not rule in Massachusetts; and what demands our gratitude still more, they never will tyrannize over her free and independent citizens.

Now this is but one of the several cases of a similar character which have occurred in Connecticut. I think there have been four or five ministers who renounced orthodoxy, and were excommunicated and punished for their heresy. The circumstances, in relation to the Rev. Luther Wilson, who was driven from Brooklyn by the conso ciation of that county, were of a much more aggravated character in several particulars. But my limits will not permit me to relate the case as I intended and had written it. Even to read over all these instances of orthodox usurpation and tyranny, is enough to make one's blood run cold; especially if he has been educated in this Commonwealth. I well know, that great allowances should be made for those of you who have been reared in Connecticut. For the very laws, under which you were trained, taught you to regard unitarianism as a heinous crime. To prove the truth of this assertion, I will make one extract from your criminal code.

"Act for the punishment of divers *capital* and *other felonies.* Sec. VIII. And be it further enacted, that if any person within this state having been educated in, or having made profession of the Christian religion, shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny the being of a God, *or any one of the Persons in the Trinity to be God;* or shall assert and maintain that there are more gods than one; or shall deny the Christian religion to be true; or the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be true; and be thereof lawfully convicted before any of the Superior Courts of this state, shall, for the first offence, be incapable to have or enjoy any offices or employments, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, or any part in them, or any profit by them. And the offices, places, and employments, enjoyed by such persons at their conviction, shall be void. — Sec. IX. And such person being a second time convicted of any of the aforesaid crimes, shall be disabled to sue, prosecute, plead, or maintain any action or information in law or equity; or be guardian of any child, or executor of any will, or administrator of any estate."

This law sounds harsh in my ears. But let us have the comment on this act by the late Judge Swift of your state. His work is entitled a System of Laws of the State of Connecticut. Chapter VII. is on *crimes against religion.* These are seven. "I. Blasphemy.

II. Atheism. III. Polytheism. IV. UNITARIANISM. V. Apostasy. VI. Breach of Sabbath. VII. Profane Swearing." On the fourth crime the learned Judge thus remarks. "IV. *Unitarianism*, or denial of the Trinity, is, where a Christian, by education or profession, denies, either by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, that any of the Persons of the Trinity is God. As a punishment for this crime, the statute enacts, that, on conviction for the first offence, the offender shall be incapable to have or enjoy any offices or employments, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, or any part in them, or profit by them; and the offices, places, and employments, enjoyed by such offenders at the time of conviction, shall be void. On a second conviction, such person is disabled to sue, prosecute, plead, or maintain any action in law or equity, or to be guardian, executor, or administrator."

Now we must remember, that it is scarcely more than a quarter of a century since a committee was chosen to revise the laws of the state, and expunge every thing inconsistent with liberty of conscience; and that this law was left untouched as containing nothing incompatible with religious freedom. We must also recollect, that it is scarcely a dozen years since the law was repealed. I suppose you, and Dr. Beecher, and the other gentlemen who have been invited from Connecticut to teach theology in this Commonwealth, regard all these enactments, as well as the proceedings of the consociations, judicious, faithful, and highly commendable. But for one, I confess, that I consider them oppressive, tyrannical, and abominably wicked. And I cannot feel sufficiently thankful, that a brighter day is dawning on Connecticut. The spirit of religious liberty is spreading among her inhabitants; and not a few of her most worthy children have embraced liberal views of theology. The blood of the martyrs will there prove the seed of the true church. But this does not weaken my conclusion, that the measures of the consociations are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

2. *Attempts to establish Consociations. Secondly.* Look at some of the attempts, which have been made by orthodox leaders, to introduce the Connecticut system of consociations into the congregational churches of this Commonwealth. I have room to notice but *three* cases of this character. And, *first*, I will mention the attempt of the orthodox clergy in the western part of Massachusetts. As I have a copy of the plan of consociations, submitted to the churches for their adoption, I will give you the introduction and conclusion of the communication. Here is the preamble. "Whereas, in the opinion of a number of ministers and delegates, chosen from the several churches, met in convention in Shelburne, August 10, 1808, the present state of the churches in this quarter calls for such union and co-operation in matters relating to the common interests of religion, as have not

hitherto deen devised and improved, and that it is desirable to adopt measures to promote Christian knowledge and communion, the convention unanimously agreed to submit the following PLAN OF CONSOCIATION to be inspected by the churches, and adopted by them, provided it meet their approbation. They are the rather encouraged to do this, from an assurance, *that similar institutions in divers parts of the country are found to be of real service in the cause of religion.*" Yes; similar institutions then existed in a sister State, and held themselves ready to bear a "judicious, faithful, and most commendable testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus." And so the true orthodox in this commonwealth wish to adopt the same measures for suppressing error and punishing heretics. As there are no very peculiar features in the eleven articles of this plan of consociation, and as I shall hereafter have occasion to notice similar proposals, I shall omit all extracts from the proposed rules, and give you merely the conclusion. These are the words. "Since the business of preparing this communication and forwarding it to the churches has been entrusted with the undersigned, and also to transact other matters relative to the same object, they have to request the several churches to which these letters shall be sent, that they will use all convenient expedition to make up their minds relative to the matter now laid before them, that if *insurmountable* obstacles do not lie in the way, their result may be obtained, and a copy of it returned to some one of us, as early as the last of October next." The churches found no insurmountable obstacles in returning their results in season. Their members had not lived under a law which punished unitarianism as a heinous crime. They had breathed the invigorating atmosphere of Christian liberty; and with one accord, they rejected the proposed plan of consociation with disdain. They saw the design of some of the clergy to bring them into servitude; and they spurned the yoke of bondage from them with manly fortitude. So that all this labor of the ministers and delegates proved vain, and worse than vain. May the descendants of such churches prove themselves worthy of such fathers.

I will now proceed to a *second* attempt of a similar character, made by the orthodox Central Association of Hampshire county. This learned body had witnessed the successful measures of the Connecticut consociations in checking the progress of heresy, and in silencing and punishing heretical ministers. They wished to adopt a similar mode of warfare to keep unitarianism from the western part of this commonwealth. Accordingly a plan for a consociation was drawn up and sent to the churches for their adoption. The Rev. Dr. Willard, then of Deerfield, like a faithful watchman, sounded the alarm, and fully exposed the iniquity of the measure. He published a review of the proposed plan in the form of a handbill, and was thus an instrument in the hands of Providence, of preserving the churches in that county from

slavery. One or two extracts from this "judicious, faithful, and most commendable testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus," will make you acquainted with the proposed plan of consociation. "At the first dash, it is proposed in effect, or what may be effect, that the churches should expunge from the bill of their religious rights the precious privilege of choosing their own ministers, and of course cease to be congregational. The consociation may always prevent their settling the man of their choice; and, when they already *have* such a one settled, he will be liable at any time to be torn from them, though it should be like plucking out their eyes; and further, if they should have a man settled, who turns out to be ever so unworthy and disagreeable, it will be in the power of the consociation to prevent dismission, and impose him on the people to the day of his death. To demonstrate all this and something more, it will be sufficient to recite the sixth and seventh articles." Then come the articles, an extract from which I will now give. "Art. VI. In all cases of ecclesiastical order and discipline, arising within the limits of the consociated churches, it shall be the duty and business of the council to afford their aid, particularly in ordaining pastors over the churches, in hearing and acting upon charges against a pastor or a church, or a minister of the gospel, in deciding questions relating to the dismission of a pastor from his charge!"—"It is however understood, that *any* associated church may, if *they* please, upon nomination of the pastor elect, choose two or three pastors, who, with delegates of their churches, may sit and act in the council at the settlement of a minister!"—"Art. VII. To save trouble and expense, a church may call in to their assistance in settling a pastor, and also in cases of controversy and discipline, a council of the consociated churches of any number, not less than six churches, nor more than half the whole number consociated!" On these articles, the Doctor thus remarks. "Comparing these two articles, we see that in respect to all ordinations, the consociation is to have at least *six* votes where the church concerned has but three, which, if they should ever be disposed to use it, will give them an absolute control over the church!" I trust this is sufficient to convince you, that the leaders of the orthodox in the western part of this Commonwealth have attempted several times to introduce the Connecticut system of consociations into our congregational churches. In both instances, their plan of usurpation and tyranny was rejected by the churches. But this does not relieve the clergy from the charge of having attempted to establish ecclesiastical courts, so that the supposed mistakes and errors of ministers and private Christians might be tried and punished as heresies, that is, as crimes.

As a *third* attempt of a similar character, I refer you to the famous undertaking of the leaders of the orthodox party in 1815. They then made a desperate effort to establish consociations throughout this

Commonwealth. This was so bold and daring, that I must give it a full consideration. And as you have deliberately denied the existence of any such attempt, I shall feel obliged to relate most of the particulars of the case. In 1814, a body of orthodox ministers assembled in Dorchester. There were twenty-four belonging to this Commonwealth, as delegates from twelve ministerial associations. They called themselves the *general* association of Massachusetts; by what right or authority I am unable to determine. There were also present two delegates from the Presbyterian church; and two from each of the orthodox conventions of Connecticut, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Some of the leaders of the Massachusetts delegation wished to introduce the Connecticut system of consociations; but they well knew that an open avowal of their design would be rejected by many of their own denomination. They accordingly commenced their undertaking by passing the following votes. "Voted, to hear and take order upon the measures proposed in an ancient document, prepared 'to serve the great intentions of religion, which is lamentably decaying in the country,' by the ministers of Massachusetts, convened in Boston in the year 1704, 5, and 6." The following vote was then passed unanimously. "Whereas an ancient document has been presented to this association, containing an answer to the question, 'What further steps are to be taken that councils may have their due constitution and efficacy, in supporting, preserving, and well ordering the interests of the churches in this country?' and assented to by the delegates of the associations met according to former agreement at Boston, September 13th, 1705, and 'further approved and confirmed by a general convention of ministers at Boston, 30th 3d month, 1706'—Voted, that a committee of seven be chosen by ballot, to inquire into the history of the abovementioned document; and particularly to ascertain, whether the resolves it contains were carried into execution at the time, and to what extent; *and to report at the next annual meeting of this association, on the expediency of a recommendation by this body of the plan of discipline therein proposed, either entire, or with alterations and amendments,* to the consideration of the associations and churches in our connexion. Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D. D., Rev. Samuel Austin, D. D., Rev. Leonard Woods, D. D., Rev. Samuel Worcester, D. D., Rev. Enoch Hale, Rev. Joseph Lyman, D. D., and the Rev. Timothy M. Cooley, were chosen a committee for the purpose above specified." Such was the display, and caution, and management necessary to bring forward the proposed change in the government of our congregational churches.

After the passing of these votes, the publishing committee were directed to print and distribute a hundred and fifty copies of the minutes of the association. They performed the specified duty, and appended to the minutes a copy of the famous document. They assure us that it has never before been published to their knowledge, and

that it is "an INVALUABLE RELIC of our pious forefathers." Now the history of this invaluable relic is soon related. It was a plan for the destruction of our congregational form of church government, drawn up by Cotton Mather, and raked out of his musty papers. It was printed soon after it was written, by the Rev. John Wise, of Ipswich. It was recommended to the adoption of the churches in that early period, and by them quickly rejected. And why? Let Cotton Mather answer for himself. "There were *some very considerable persons among the ministers, as well as of the brethren, who thought the liberties of particular churches to be in danger of being limited and infringed by its adoption. In deference to these*, the proposals were never prosecuted beyond the bounds of mere proposals." All this should have been known to some one or more of the general association who make such pretences to an acquaintance with the proceedings of our Pilgrim fathers. Still all this parade and artifice were necessary to keep the suspicions of the free people of this State in profound quiet, and receive the attention and co-operation of the more liberal of the orthodox denomination.

Well, this said general association met at Royalston on the 27th of June, 1815. The chairman of the great and learned committee for inquiring into the history of the invaluable document, informs the body, "that they have attended *deliberately* and *prayerfully* to the *weighty* and *very important business* committed to them, and respectfully submit the following Report." As it regards the use to be made of this document, they declare that its proposals are such as *congregational ministers cannot consistently recommend or approve.* They proceed to offer several reasons, why a reform was greatly needed in the congregational churches in Massachusetts. I must give a passing notice to these very powerful reasons. Speaking of the old system of clerical discipline, they beg leave to call the attention of the *general* association to those evils in *our* ecclesiastical state, which affect *churches* and *ministers* in their *public character*, and in their relation to each other. After stating that churches have a relation to each other, and ought to have ministerial and church fellowship with each other, they assert that this principle is *practically disregarded.* They then specify sundry other existing evils. And, *First, a neglect of discipline towards offending members of churches, and the difficulty of going through a regular course of discipline when attempted.* They assert, that the principal thing which has a tendency to increase and perpetuate this evil, is the abandonment of the sacred principle of fellowship among the churches. In maintaining this discipline over its members, every church needs the support of every other church. They dwell much and long on this great evil. But the amount of all their remarks seems to me to be nothing more nor less than this; — there should be such a *union* of the

churches as that their *power* should be felt through the *whole country;* and not the power of *persuasion*, but the power of *coercion.*

Secondly, the committee complain, *that there is no regular and acknowledged method in which congregational churches can exercise a Christian watch and care over each other.* This is indeed a most singular objection. A committee of *congregational* ministers loudly complain, that there is no regular method by which *authority may be exercised over sister churches!!* Why, the very essence of congregationalism, the single and peculiar characteristic which distinguished the Independents from the Presbyterians, was their utter and entire rejection of all authority or jurisdiction of one church over another! But, say this learned committee, "A *church* as well as an *individual* may *apostatize* from the common faith, and fall into disorders incompatible with the Christian character. If such be the fact with any church, can other churches in fellowship be *indifferent?* It is the *duty of a church in every such case to* SUBMIT *to an investigation*, and be ready to give every reasonable *satisfaction.* But so distracted is the state of OUR *ecclesiastical affairs*, and so vague, and loose, and weak the principle of union, that churches in *our* fellowship may go to the *greatest lengths* of *apostasy* without any *inspection*, and without losing that indefinite fellowship with us which they before enjoyed!" O dreadful! Why not use plain language? What was the real cause of all this whining? Why, some sixty or seventy churches in the congregational connexion had gradually adopted new, and as they sincerely believed, better views of Christian truth. There was not in Massachusetts, *there never had been*, a power to call a whole church to account for its opinions, its *heresies*, its DAMNABLE HERESIES, if you so please to call them. Our ancestors thought that every church had a *right* to examine and judge for itself concerning religious opinions. They did not admit that other churches could call any particular church to account for its sentiments. Hence when this new, and better, and more Scriptural doctrine began to prevail, the intolerant majority of the congregational clergy looked into the usages of our ancestors, and found to their dismay no power on the part of the majority to deal with the offenders after the manner of Rome, or the general assembly of Scotland, or even the consociated churches of Connecticut. And hence the appointment of this committee, with its bitter lamentations, and its truly papal recommendations.

The *third* objection, which this committee make to the old system of church discipline, is "*the want of a settled and effectual method of calling ministers to account for immorality and* ERROR, *and of protecting them against calumny and injustice.*" Now what is the real meaning of all this? There was never any defect in the means of calling a minister to account by his *own* people or his *own* church, to whom alone he is amenable. But there was no provision by which the Old South church

could bring Dr. Channing to trial before a tribunal, selected at Andover or New Haven, for *erroneous opinions*, by him advanced in a published or unpublished discourse, with which his *own* church and people were delighted. I must believe that this was the true foundation of the complaint. For the committee well knew, that each church and society had always enjoyed a sufficient and perfect remedy as to its own pastor, under our ecclesiastical constitution; a remedy which our courts of law would enforce. They also well knew, that the old system of mutual councils would be urged as a sufficient remedy; and accordingly they proceed to abuse this mode of trial, in such a manner and with such a spirit, as shows their utter hostility to the congregational form of government. "It is not to *mutual* councils we object," say this very learned committee, "but to the *mode* of constituting them." And yet the mode of constituting is precisely that which renders them *mutual*, and contains their only merit. I hope the reader will not laugh indiscreetly, when I state the mode in which *mutual* councils are proposed to be improved. It is this. The consociation is, by a standing covenant, which may endure for centuries, to be constituted the council, and for that reason to be *called* MUTUAL! What a mockery! With equal reason you may affirm, that, our ancestors having provided for a Supreme Court, that court is to be considered a board of referees, to which all future parties, to the end of time, are to be presumed to have agreed mutually to submit their controversies. Such are the subtilties of orthodox divines, by which they first impose on themselves and then on others. The committee conclude their report with proposing "A PLAN OF ECCLESIASTICAL ORDER."

Well, Sir, after this elaborate report had been read, the Association chose the Rev. Drs. Morse, Codman, and Woods, a committee to have it printed and circulated in the several associations in their connexion, "*for the purpose of ascertaining the* PUBLIC *sentiment respecting the plan of ecclesiastical order therein presented.*" And what is the character of this new plan? The committee recommend, that *the churches shall explicitly adopt and put in practice the following articles of agreement.* — *First*, the propositions of the synod of 1662 are acknowledged as the *basis of consociations*. *Secondly*, particular consociations shall be formed within certain limits. In this article there is a wonderfully generous provision, that churches *not* joining the consociation shall *not be treated* as parties. *Thirdly*, provision is made for the regular meetings of the new ecclesiastical tribunal. *Fourthly*, each consociation is indulged with the privilege of choosing its own moderator and scribe. *Fifthly*, this constitution is declared to be the constitution of all consociations in the general body; yet each separate consociation has the privilege of adopting such regulations as are not repugnant to this constitution; that is, saving in all cases the papal power and supremacy. *Sixthly*, by this extraordinary article, the *consociation* is substituted for *mutual*

councils in *all* ages, and without the express consent of the parties and in defiance of our state constitution and republican principles, is declared to be the *legal* and competent tribunal for the following solemn purposes: — *to hear and decide upon any complaint* and allegation touching ministerial character against any minister belonging to it; to *acquit* or *find guilty*, to *advise*, *maintain*, or DEPOSE, as the case may require. Then comes the quintessence of ecclesiastical despotism. It is to be understood, however, that any consociation may provide, upon principles and for reasons distinctly to be made known to them, for *cases* in which it may not be *expedient* for *all the members* to be concerned; as also for *cases*, in which it may be proper for *others not of the body*, to be admitted to sit in the council. Now, what are the true and only purposes of this formal and technical rule, when reduced to plain English? Simply these. The consociation is, to all future time, made by a fiction the *mutual* choice of both parties; but through fear that heresy might even infect the consociation itself, it is provided, that the consociation may exclude any member at pleasure from any trial, and admit others not members of the particular consociation to sit therein. That is, it is permitted to each consociation in all cases to *pack a jury*, provided it be for the justifiable purpose of deposing an heretical minister. There was, indeed, a right of appeal to two or more neighbouring consociations, except for private church members; they were to be condemned without appeal. Such is a bare synopsis of this proposed plan of ecclesiastical order.

Now what is proved by the history of this report? First, that the committee who drew it up consisted of the ablest men in the denomination. Secondly, that they approved their own plan, and wished it carried into execution. Thirdly, that the Association so far approved of its scope, design, principles, and objects, as to submit it to the associations in their connexion. And, fourthly, that the new plan of ecclesiastical order contained all the worst features of the Connecticut system of consociations. It is indeed astonishing, that Dr. Woods could have had the folly to believe, that a people, who had so long enjoyed the sweets of religious liberty, would voluntarily adopt a system, by which that liberty would be for ever sacrificed. But that most of the orthodox ministers who were assembled in that Association should have fallen into the same error, does indeed surpass belief. It therefore requires this minute and authentic recapitulation of the facts to enable it to find believers at a period of fifteen years after its *perpetration*.

And how was this plan of ecclesiastical order received by the community? With marked disapprobation. It produced nearly as much talk and excitement throughout the Commonwealth, as the recent revolutions in Europe are now producing among our free citizens. Its adoption was opposed by all classes of society; and especially by some distinguished individuals of orthodox sentiments. Among others, one

of the founders of your Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Spring of Newburyport, attacked the plan with great power and success. He declares in his pamphlet, that "the plan of ecclesiastical order is not authorized by reason or revelation;" that it is not "friendly to the liberty and rights of conscience;" that it "will invest clergymen especially with more influence over their churches than they ought to possess;" that "it is an infringement of the rights of distinct branches of the church and of individual brethren;" that "it exceeds the plan of the Fathers very far indeed, by placing the communion of churches under the care and management of standing councils or consociations; and by making all ministers in the connexion amenable directly to the consociation, instead of their own church and occasional councils;" and "that, if it succeed, it will introduce a revolution amid our churches." "On the whole," says the Doctor, "we sincerely think, that the genius and habits of the good people of this State are so averse to arbitrary and aristocratic government or domination, that the measures contemplated will not meet that share of public approbation which promises utility to Zion." Is not this orthodox authority sufficient to convince you that Dr. Channing uttered the truth and nothing but the truth, when he published the following sentence, which you have so often quoted and ridiculed. "It is a melancholy fact, that our long established congregational form of church government is menaced, and tribunals unknown to our churches, and unknown, as we believe, to the Scriptures, are to be introduced; and introduced for the very purpose, that the supposed errors and mistakes of ministers and private Christians may be tried and punished as heresies; that is, as crimes." The writings of Dr. Spring and Dr. Channing did much to awaken public attention to the threatened danger. But a publication of the Hon. John Lowell produced a much greater effect; because it gave a full view of the enormous evils to be inflicted on the churches by the new plan of ecclesiastical order; and because it was published in several different parts of the Commonwealth, and in this manner very generally circulated through the community. So that this wonderful child of many fathers barely breathed to expire under the maledictions of a free Christian people. It was so detested by the intelligent citizens of Massachusetts, that it was strangled in its very birth. And its fond parents found but few to sympathize with them under its early and sudden destruction.

I presume, Sir, you are now ready to acknowledge, that an attempt was made by the leaders of the orthodox party in eighteen hundred and fifteen, to change the government of our congregational churches, and introduce tribunals hitherto unknown to them, so that the errors and mistakes of ministers and Christians might be tried and punished as heresies; that is, as crimes. And you will further admit, that the plan of ecclesiastical order proposed by the great and learned orthodox committee, is subversive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the

principles of congregationalism. In fact, you have already admitted this in your letter on Religious Liberty. Now, Sir, permit me to ask you a few friendly questions. In your treatment of Dr. Channing on this particular point, have you not been guilty of *singular unfairness*? Just review the circumstances of the case. An attempt was made by the leaders of the orthodox party, in eighteen hundred and fifteen, to change the ecclesiastical order of our congregational churches. At the very time, Dr. Channing wrote an able article to prevent its success. Distinguished men of orthodox sentiments entertained similar views of the design, and also warned the community to guard against the threatened danger. By such noble exertions, a great excitement was produced throughout the Commonwealth, and the nefarious attempt was blown to perdition. After fifteen years, Dr. Channing collects most of his writings into a large volume; and among other articles, republishes the above mentioned essay, taking special care to date it, *eighteen hundred and fifteen*. In that essay, he simply asserts what every body knew to be literally true at the time of publication. As soon as this volume is well before the public, with much blustering you boldly declare, that this assertion of Dr. Channing is not true. You bring forward the quotation several times, and ridicule the idea of any such attempt on the part of the orthodox. You treat an opinion of fifteen years' standing, which was an undisputed truth at the time of its publication, as the sentiment of the present year. Is not this most singular unfairness? And what excuse can you offer for such an outrage upon the integrity of Dr. Channing, and the understanding of the community? Will you aver, that you were wholly ignorant of the fact of this attempt of the General Association? — that you were not at that time a citizen of this Commonwealth? — and that you had never read the publications of that period? Such a confession would be one kind of apology, but not such an one as will be satisfactory to intelligent men. For when the very integrity of such a man was concerned, had you any right to make such positive assertions without one word of inquiry as to their truth? And how can you reconcile such ignorance with your standing, your profession, your pretended respect for the sincerity and greatness of Dr. Channing? How can you assert, that you are more or less acquainted with *all*, against whom his charges are specially directed, and never have asked your respected friend and colleague, whether there was any foundation for the declaration of Dr. Channing? But on the other hand, if you were not ignorant of the fact, what could be your motive for charging Dr. Channing with uttering what was not true? Did you rely upon the strong hold of the weak men of your party? — upon the credulity of the ignorant and bigoted, and their firm resolution never to read any reply which might be made to your assertions? Did you expect the orthodox to adopt this course of reasoning, in imitation of some of your leaders? "Dr. Channing

made an assertion as to the attempted measures of the leaders of our denomination. Mr. Stuart solemnly charges him with stating what is not true. Mr. Stuart must known the truth, because he declares he is acquainted with *all* the orthodox against whom Dr. Channing's remarks are directed. We will not, therefore, read any reply which may be made to his solemn assertions; for the answer must come from an unitarian, or from an orthodox man who will not acknowledge the infallibility of our leaders; and such men are unworthy of belief, because they must be either unitarians, or worse than unitarians." I have no doubt this course of reasoning will be substantially adopted by numbers. But, Sir, you may rest assured, that you have mistaken the orthodox community, if you expect them all to pursue such a course. No; those who are independent will sift this subject to the bottom, and they will come to the conclusion, that in this particular at least, you have manifested either great ignorance, or aggravated wickedness. And I therefore ask, if you are not bound by every obligation, human and divine, either to make a public acknowledgement of your ignorance of this fact, or to reconcile your knowledge of it with your printed remarks; either to retract your charges of falsehood against Dr. Channing, or to prove that his statement was not true when first published?

3. *Ecclesiastical Councils. Thirdly.* Look at the proceedings of orthodox ecclesiastical councils. When assembled for specified purposes they have converted themselves into ecclesiastical courts, and endeavoured to try and punish their ministerial brethren for their honest sentiments. In so doing, they have not only trampled on the rights of their fellow Christians, but have openly violated principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism. I will mention *three* different classes of violations. And *first*, take those cases, in which councils have been invited to aid in the ordination of congregational ministers. In 1813 a council was invited by the church and society in Greenfield, to assist in the ordination of their pastor elect. Among this number was the Rev. Mr. Willard of Deerfield. A large minority were unwilling to proceed to the business for which they had been convened, because they could do nothing which should be considered an act of fellowship with Mr. Willard. They could not sit in council with this gentleman, because he would not submit to be catechized by them as to his religious opinions; and because they presumed he would not assent to all the articles of their human formulary of faith. After discussing this question for nearly two days, and increasing the expenses of the society to a large amount, they advised the church and congregation to call another council; and then dissolved their meeting. Now did not these ministers know that Mr. Willard was to be on the council? Were they invited to pass a censure on his ministerial character? Were they not at perfect liberty to remain at home, if

they could not peaceably assist the church in the ordination? Here then is one instance in which an orthodox council neglected the duties for which they had been assembled; insulted those by whose invitation they had been convened, and endeavoured to injure a brother minister for a fearless maintenance of his congregational rights. In 1821, the congregational society in Wareham invited a council to aid them in ordaining a pastor elect. Among the number was the Rev. Mr. Goodwin of Sandwich. It was known that he had embraced unitarian sentiments. Accordingly some measure must be devised for excluding him from the council. A pretence was therefore made by certain orthodox leaders, that he was not the pastor of a regularly organized church; when the Supreme Court had decided, that the church over which he was settled, was the first congregational church in Sandwich. One of the orthodox members however acknowledged, that this circumstance would not have been mentioned, had his religious opinions been Calvinistic. Here then is another instance in which the *peaceable* orthodox ministers of this state undertook to disregard the rights of congregational churches, and pass sentence of condemnation on ministerial brethren for their honest opinions. More cases of the same character might be mentioned, but these are sufficient for my present purpose.

Now is not this converting orthodox councils into ecclesiastical courts, and punishing brethren for their supposed errors and mistakes? Is not this conduct subversive of congregational rights? One of the most sacred rights of a congregational church is this; that each church has full power to transact *all* its own concerns. It may ordain a minister over itself without *any* aid from sister churches. Several ministers were so ordained in the early history of our Commonwealth. When a church invites the assistance of other churches, it does not ask them to dictate,— to decide on the ministerial character of other invited guests; no, it merely requests them to assist in the ordination. If they cannot do this, their presence is never desired. And a majority have no more right to exclude a minority, than the minority have to exclude the majority. All this is usurpation. And what would you say, should a unitarian majority of an ordaining council exclude the orthodox minority? Would you not pronounce such conduct intolerant, abusive, unchristian! And is it any the less intolerant, any the less abusive, any the less unchristian, when perpetrated by an orthodox majority?

Secondly, take those cases in which ecclesiastical councils have endeavoured to injure the ministerial character of those preachers who have renounced orthodoxy. The proceedings against the Rev. Mr. Field furnish us with a fair specimen of this class of orthodox usurpations. The circumstances are briefly these. The Rev. Mr. Field was led, by a most patient and prayerful study of the Scriptures, to depart from the human explanations of certain orthodox doctrines. He freely stated his new views to his ministerial brethren, and earnestly desired them

to expose his errors. But they were unable or unwilling to discuss such controverted questions, and accordingly excluded him from his equal rights and privileges in their association. He soon exposed their intolerant and unchristian conduct in a small publication. They chose a committee of the Franklin Association to request him to unite with them in calling a mutual council for the settlement of their difficulties. His principal difficulties were the cruel persecutions of these very ministers, and these he chose to leave for settlement at the great day of accounts, and consequently declined their proposal. They however proceeded to convene an *ex parte* council at Greenfield, some twelve or fifteen miles from Charlemont, for the trial of Mr. Field, in August, 1822. After long deliberation, the council came to a result. They invited the people of the surrounding country to hear it read in the meetinghouse, so as to make their sentence of condemnation as widely known as convenient. The impression left on the mind of the hearers was this: "That the Rev. Mr. Field had been betrayed into conduct unworthy his sacred office, and which evidently tended to injure his reputation and impede his usefulness." And why was all this parade and persecution? Simply because Mr. Field had renounced some orthodox opinions, and, in a fearless and honest manner, exposed the iniquity of his persecutors. Just reverse the case. Suppose Dr. Channing had called on you to unite with him in a mutual council for the settlement of your difficulties. Suppose you had declined, and an *ex parte* council had been convened at Salem to investigate your conduct. Suppose they should invite the inhabitants of that and the neighbouring towns to hear their result; and should leave the impression upon the public mind, that you had been betrayed into unchristian and immoral conduct, and that your ministerial character was ruined. Would you not pronounce such proceedings oppressive, tyrannical, and wicked? And are they any the less oppressive, or tyrannical, or wicked, when perpetrated by an orthodox *ex parte* council without a hundredth part of the provocation?

Thirdly, take those cases in which orthodox councils have openly violated their pledges and the principles of congregational order. The proceedings of an orthodox *ex parte* council at Charlemont furnish a fair illustration of such usurpations. The circumstances are briefly these. After the Rev. Mr. Field had been excluded from the Franklin Association for heresy, an attempt was made with some success to create a dissatisfaction with his ministerial services among his people. A part of the society seceded, and held meetings by themselves for nearly a year. They then called themselves the first church, and proposed to Mr. Field to unite with them in calling a mutual council for the settlement of their difficulties. But, in proposing a council, they would not allow him the liberty of electing his part of the ministers, only from one or two orthodox associations. This of course prevented his accept-

ance of their proposals; for the council would not be *mutual*, if they chose all the members. An *ex parte* council was then convened by letters from these seceders. The council acknowledged this body as the true and first church; declared themselves regularly called; asserted that the church had sufficient reason for such a course, since their proposals for a mutual council were rejected; dissolved the ministerial relation between Mr. Field and his people; and vented all their spleen, by abusing him in their result, in the most shameful manner. And all this too, after one of the council had pledged himself and the council, that their result should contain nothing to wound the feelings either of Mr. Field or his friends. My limits do not permit me to enter into all the particulars of this case. The documents before me are full and satisfactory. And the impression on my own mind is this; that the annals of the inquisition can scarcely furnish a parallel case of persecution, to that which has been carried on by orthodox ministers against Mr. Field. I am credibly informed that one of the orthodox ministers in that very region, when speaking of the persecuting conduct of his orthodox ministerial brethren, pronounced it "DIABOLICAL." Now bring this measure home to our own county. Several of the orthodox ministers in this vicinity have latterly refused to exchange with unitarians. This is contrary to the wishes of a large majority of their supporters. Suppose this majority should propose to their minister to call a mutual council to settle their difficulties; but should limit his choice of ministers to one or two associations of unitarian preachers. Suppose he should decline the insulting proposal; and they should convene an *ex parte* council for the proposed business. Suppose the council should proceed to dissolve the pastoral relation between the minister and his flock, and hold him up to the public as unworthy of confidence. Would you not call this uncongregational, and a direct violation of the rights of minister and people? And is not the case at Charlemont infinitely worse than this supposition? Will you not admit that the proceedings of orthodox ecclesiastical councils have sometimes been subversive of the rights of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism?

4. *Ministerial Associations. Fourthly.* Look at the proceedings of orthodox ministerial associations. These associations were originally formed for friendly intercourse and mutual improvement. One would naturally suppose that more progress must be made in Christian knowledge, where the members had embraced different religious sentiments. But it appears that such has not been the opinion of orthodox ministers. And facts will show that several of their associations have converted themselves into ecclesiastical courts, so as to call unitarians to account for their honest opinions, to pass sentence of condemnation on their publications, and to proclaim to the world that their characters are unministerial and unchristian. I will mention *three* different classes of such proceedings. Take, *first*, those cases in which orthodox asso-

ciations have called unitarian ministers to account for their opinions, and excluded them from their meetings for their supposed errors. In 1820, a committee of two was chosen by the Hampshire Central Association to catechize the Rev. Mr. Bailey as to his religious opinions. He received them very politely, and answered their questions very cheerfully. A few months after, he received a letter from the scribe of the association, informing him, that in consequence of his errors, his connexion with their body was dissolved. They however granted him the privilege of appearing before them to answer to the charge of heresy. He did not incline to accept their very generous offer. And by what right did they pass this vote of exclusion? The right of the strongest. They were the majority; and therefore had the power to persecute. This is a fair sample of a multitude of similar cases. Among those who have been excluded from orthodox associations for embracing unitarian sentiments, are such men as the Rev. Dr. Noah Worcester, the Rev. Thomas Worcester, the Rev. Preserved Smith, the Rev. Joseph Field, the Rev. Dan Huntington, the Rev. Winthrop Bailey, and the Rev. Mr. Sherman. Suppose a unitarian majority should exclude an orthodox minority from their associations. What would you say of their conduct? Would you not pronounce it usurpation, intolerance, bigotry? And is it less usurpation, and intolerance, and bigotry, when perpetrated by orthodox majorities?

Secondly, take those cases in which orthodox associations have denounced the publications of unitarians. The Rev. Mr. Field published his sentiments on the Trinity and Atonement. The Franklin Association record their testimony, that "those sentiments are not agreeable with divine revelation, nor according to the faith of the true church of Christ from age to age, nor in unison with the testimony of genuine Christian experience." Take another example from the records of the Hopkinton Association. "The Hopkinton Association, having seen and read a publication, entitled *Bible News*, another entitled *An Impartial Review of Testimonies*, by Rev. Noah Worcester, and several other publications by Rev. Thomas Worcester, all going to disprove the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as held by the great Reformers, by our pious forefathers, by the orthodox churches of the Christian world at the present day, and in the opinion of this association fully supported by the Scriptures of truth; and feeling it our duty, not only in an individual, but in an associate capacity, to bear testimony against all error, and especially against so material an error as a denial of the self-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; therefore *voted*, that the doctrine contained in the above named publications is in our opinion a departure from the pure faith of the church of Christ; tends to strengthen the enemies, and thereby greatly to injure the cause, of Zion." Perhaps these two are sufficient specimens of the votes of orthodox associations. And now what do you consider the character of such proceedings?

Just bring the measure home to your own bosom. Suppose the Boston Association should record such a vote and preamble as the following: 'The Boston Association, having seen and read a publication, entitled *A Letter on Religious Liberty*, by the Rev. Moses Stuart, going to prove that the orthodox sect is the only liberal denomination; and feeling it our duty to bear testimony against all error, not only in an individual but in an associate capacity, and especially against so material an error as that above stated, which is not only contrary to the belief of the true church, but subversive of all morality; therefore *voted*, that the above named publication is in our opinion a departure from the truth, tends to strengthen the enemies, and thereby greatly to injure the cause, of Zion.' I need not ask, if you would not regard such a measure as indicating the inability of the Association to answer your publication. But I may ask if you would not call such conduct a very silly business? And is the same action any the less silly when performed by an orthodox association?

Thirdly, take those cases in which orthodox associations have published to the world, that the conduct of certain ministers of good Christian character, rendered them unworthy of public confidence. This was done by the Hampshire Central Association the last year in relation to a worthy minister of orthodox sentiments. The circumstances are briefly these. A part of the orthodox society in Westhampton seceded, and held separate meetings. They employed an orthodox minister by the name of *John Truair*. The association in that region were interested to prevent the formation of a second parish in that town. They accordingly chose a committee to persuade the two parties to unite, and Mr. Truair to leave the place. The seceders agreed to return to the old congregation, and their preacher to retire from their employment, on certain conditions. The Committee of the Association then gave to Mr. Truair the following recommendation: "We, the Committee of the Hampshire Association, hereby certify, that we consider Rev. John Truair's Christian and ministerial standing good, and as such we recommend him to the employment of the churches and societies wherever God in his providence shall call him." The old society did not comply with their part of the conditions, and the seceders therefore refused to return, and still employed their present preacher. The Association, with a long and truly papal preamble, publish in the Hampshire Gazette the following resolutions: "*Resolved*, that the conduct of Rev. John Truair, since he has resided within the limits of this association, has been such as to forfeit our confidence in him as a minister of Christ. *Resolved*, that it is our duty to give public notice of our views of his conduct, and thus warn the churches against his influence; and that, for this purpose, the scribe of the Association is hereby directed, after sending a copy of this act of withdrawment to the Rev. John Truair, immediately to cause it to be published in the

Hampshire Gazette." This bull of excommunication was immediately published, with the names of twenty orthodox ministers attached. And what had this persecuted man done to merit this severe and destructive persecution? Nothing half so bad as the orthodox preachers are doing almost every day in this vicinity. I wish his *Appeal* may be read by every friend of religious freedom.

Take the case of the Rev. Thomas Worcester of Salisbury, N. H. He had been persecuted in almost every possible manner by the orthodox, because he renounced the doctrine of the Trinity. But the Hopkinton Association filled up the measure of his sufferings, by publishing to the world, that he was *not worthy to be owned or employed as a Christian minister on account of his great* ERRORS. I have not room for the bull of excommunication and condemnation which they published in two or three newspapers. You see in this minister a very fair specimen of the persecutions a man must suffer, if he dares to think for himself and differ from the standard of orthodoxy. I wish you to notice this case. I will give you a slight view of his sufferings in his own words. Here they are. "Who can help seeing *much*, VERY MUCH, to deter even good men from faithful inquiry, in such *reproaches*, *censures*, and *privations*, as have, in our day, and in this land of liberty, been the consequences of denying such a cardinal point of popular orthodoxy? Even in New England, in this greatly distinguished portion of the Christian community, a minister of the Gospel has more than a little to fear as a consequence of giving up the *triune* faith. Take my own case as a witness. Although for more than ten years after an open avowal of my disbelief of the triune doctrine, I was permitted to hold my place as a pastor, the most of the time in a good degree of peace and comfort at home; yet to have my name so much, and so extensively as it was, cast out as evil, and to be disowned, and treated as a great *errorist*, so much as I was, by ministers, who for twenty preceding years had treated me as a brother in deed and in truth, was not a very small trial. And after this, to be separated from a beloved people, to whose welfare I had been devoted for thirty years; to have the hearts of some torn from me, and to be torn from the hearts of so many as remain tenderly attached, and are to me much endeared brethren and friends; to have my temporal support unexpectedly taken away, leaving me under embarrassments and privations, to be felt, in all probability, as long as my life shall continue; and to be, under a considerable advance in the decline of life, subjected to great uncertainty as to any productive employment, in the only way to which I have been accustomed to it from my youth; all this cannot be deemed a very small trial. Nor was it expected that it would be so considered. But those, who occasioned it, probably expected it would be so viewed, as to have, like other things of a similar nature, a deterring influence, to prevent other instances of departure from the point of reputed orthodoxy in question." Since this was written, a little orthodox church in the

place, a minority of a minority, have passed a vote of excommunication against the man who was once their own pastor. But with all these means of persecution, many of his old parishioners remain firm friends. In the few months that the Rev. Mr. Cross has been settled in the town, the venerable and persecuted and dismissed pastor has been invited to attend thirteen out of sixteen funerals which have occurred. Here then is a specimen of the persecutions which many most worthy ministers have had to suffer from orthodox bigotry, simply because they preferred the language of Christ to the language of human creeds. It is enough to make the heart bleed to read over all the documents in my possession, which reveal the unchristian treatment of unitarian ministers and Christians by the leaders of the orthodox denomination. But I have given facts enough to prove that orthodox ministerial associations have converted themselves into ecclesiastical courts, so as to try and punish the supposed errors of unitarians as heresies, that is, as crimes. And you will surely admit that all such proceedings are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

5. *Churches. Fifthly.* Look at the proceedings of orthodox churches. They also have converted themselves into ecclesiastical courts to try and punish Christians for their honest sentiments. They have assumed unscriptural power, and made the exercise of their authority subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. I will mention *four* different classes of facts in proof of these assertions. Look, *first*, at the terms of *admission* into orthodox churches. Two circumstances strike me as peculiarly oppressive and unchristian. One is this. The candidate for admission is obliged to profess his hearty belief in the articles of a long human creed, before he can be received to communion. Now from what source do you obtain authority to require this confession? From Christ Jesus? No; he has given no such right to any man, nor to any body of men. He has explicitly taught us, that those are his true disciples who keep *his words*, and not those who compel their equals to subscribe to words and phrases of man's invention. And if you do not obtain your authority from Jesus Christ, is it not usurped? Is he not the sole Head of the church? Is he not the only Lawgiver of Christians? Is he not the only Master of true followers? Are not all his disciples on an equal footing? Have not the minority of the communicants precisely the same right to prescribe a creed for the majority, that the majority have to do this for the minority? Has not the only lawful creed-maker for Christians given a perfect standard of Christian faith and practice in his own language? Is it not high presumption in man to attempt to improve upon the teachings of the only infallible Guide? And not only so. Is not this practice of compelling members to subscribe a human creed most wicked? Just consider one circumstance of very frequent occurrence in your churches. A young man, for instance, who has lived a very thoughtless and

irreligious life, is suddenly converted. After a few weeks he is admitted to the communion with great formality. Before God and man, he professes his hearty belief in the articles of a long human creed, which perhaps he never saw or heard till that moment. Is he not thus compelled to utter a solemn falsehood? How can he believe a proposition without evidence? Has he obtained conclusive proof, during a few weeks' hasty and agitated perusal of the Scriptures, that all the articles of the creed are literally true? Is this possible? For my own part, I have often shuddered, when I have known young and ignorant converts compelled to express their hearty belief in propositions which they *did not understand*, and of course could not *believe*. I think you will admit that this practice of orthodox churches is both unscriptural and injurious.

The other circumstance to which I alluded is this. The candidate for admission is obliged, not only to profess his hearty belief in the articles of the creed, but he is also compelled to take a solemn vow that he will never disbelieve these articles. Let me quote a few sentences, in proof of this assertion, from the covenant of one of your new churches. "Hereafter you can *never withdraw* from the watch and communion of *saints* without a *breach of covenant*. Let it be impressed on your minds, that you have come under *solemn obligations*, from which you can *never escape*. Wherever you go, these *vows* will be upon you. They will follow you to the bar of God; and in whatever world you may be fixed, *will abide upon you to eternity*. You have *unalterably committed* yourselves, and henceforth you *must be* the servants of God." Now what do you call this? Is not the candidate made to believe, that he can never depart from the sentiments of the human creed without a breach of his covenant engagements? — without a violation of his most solemn obligations? — without a wilful transgression of his everlasting vows? Certainly. For I have known instances in which those, who had renounced their orthodox belief, were so assured. One lady, who requested a dismission and recommendation to a unitarian church, was informed that no dismission would be granted, that she must be excommunicated for a breach of her covenant engagements. Another lady, who had embraced unitarian sentiments, was told by her pastor, that she had *perjured* herself. And now where do you obtain authority for such a measure? Is it derived from Christ? No. I contend that you have no right whatever to make any person take such solemn oaths, as a necessary step to the communion table. For in so doing, you in effect require them to promise to perform one of two things, — either to neglect the Bible wholly, or to perform an impossibility. If you allow them to study the Scriptures, no doubt they will depart at least from some expressions of the creed; and they cannot believe the human opinion in opposition to Scriptural evidence. I do hope the followers of Jesus will look to this clerical usurpation of his rightful authority;

and banish all such human traditions from the school of their divine Master. For I think a candid consideration of these two practices must convince them of their unscriptural character and illiberal and oppressive tendency.

In the *second* place, look to the causes of *excommunications* from orthodox churches. *Three* circumstances strike me as peculiarly oppressive and unchristian. One is this. The orthodox have repeatedly excommunicated members from their churches who were not accused of any unchristian or immoral conduct; who exhibited a religious temper and character, and who made the Scriptures their *only* standard of faith and practice. And for what cause? Simply for obeying the plain commands of Jesus. Simply for searching the Scriptures for themselves, and expressing their sentiments in the very words of the sacred writers. Simply because they followed the Lord Jesus, instead of human masters. Cases of this kind are of so frequent occurrence, that it is not necessary to mention particular examples. In one instance, the minister assured a lady who had embraced unitarianism, that her *crime* was much more alarming than any open immorality. In another place, a man, who still adhered to orthodoxy, was publicly excommunicated, because he sent his children to a unitarian sunday school and would not pronounce the unitarian doctrine to be as bad as Deism and Atheism. But as you may want evidence of this assertion, I will give you an extract from a letter lately received by a gentleman in this vicinity from a most respectable unitarian minister in another State. The letter was written without any knowledge of my undertaking, and is now used by me without his knowledge or permission.

"The Presbyterians are waging most bitter war against us; war to the very knife. There is no form of accusation or misrepresentation left untried; the same slandering of private character and the same misrepresentations of which you see something in Massachusetts. They are endeavouring to crush all freedom of thought and opinion. No longer than a week ago, a man, against whose moral and religious character not a single charge was brought, a man who is a presbyterian in his faith, was publicly excommunicated from the presbyterian church; and these were the reasons, *viz.* That he had sent his children to an unitarian sunday school, and on being questioned by the church sessions, had said, that he did not think the unitarian belief was as bad as it had been represented; that is, as bad as Deism and Atheism. These were the reasons, as read from the pulpit, in full meeting for communion, for expelling a man from the presbyterian church. The people are taught that it is wicked to hear a unitarian preach, or read a unitarian book. The Rev. Mr. ———, in a long and labored paragraph, puts on the same ground, permission granted by the presbytery for the people of their charge to hear unitarian preaching, and permission granted by a father for his children to visit a brothel or gaming-

table. He says, that those who are trained up in unitarian sentiments, are trained up in the way to hell, to be damned. Every means that can prevent people from hearing, thinking, or knowing any thing of unitarianism; every measure that can be devised and enforced, is put in operation. The terrors of church censure and hell-fire, things almost equally terrible, are made the instruments of barring men from thought and knowledge. Every thing like freedom of thought is crushed. This is what is to be feared; not Calvinistic doctrines, but this tyranny over men's opinions and consciences; a tyranny to the full as bad as any that could possibly proceed from the union of church and state; a tyranny that stretches across our land, blighting and withering, and making thousands and tens of thousands of unbelievers and hypocrites. *September*, 1830."

This, Sir, may seem to you strong language. But my own observation, during an absence of three months, last season, in which I touched upon some ten or eleven of the States, enables me to testify to its literal truth. Without, however, dwelling on this case, I will return to the common excommunications in this region for an honest difference of opinion. And I would ask, from what source you obtain authority for such proceedings? From reason? There is nothing reasonable in the practice. How much more reasonable would it be for the persecuted disciple to excommunicate the persecuters for not adhering to the words of revelation? Is your authority derived from Scripture? I challenge you to produce any such authority from the Bible. I challenge you, or any other man, to produce one passage of holy writ, which gives an orthodox church the right to excommunicate a member for heresy, so long as the member makes the Bible his standard of faith, and exhibits a Christian character. You, indeed, have the majority, and can *vote* him to be a heretic. But does your vote make him any the less a Christian? And on the same principle, why do you not vote to see if he may deal honestly, or love mercy, or walk humbly with his God; as well as to determine whether he may obey the dying request of his Saviour, and follow the plain language of inspiration in forming his religious belief? I do think that a little consideration must convince candid minds, that excommunication for honest opinions merely, is both unchristian and tyrannical. The Pope excommunicated Martin Luther, and Martin Luther excommunicated the Pope. And was not the bull pronounced by the heretic as valid as the one by the head of orthodoxy?

The next circumstance to which I alluded is this. Orthodox churches have refused to dismiss members and recommend them to unitarian churches. And when they have united with such churches, in compliance with congregational rules, they have been excommunicated for their conduct. Repeated instances of this nature have lately

occurred. Orthodox ministers have assured such members, both in conversation and writing, that theirs were cases of *peculiar guilt* and *imminent peril*, and that they would cheerfully recommend them to a *Christian* church. I will take one instance for an illustration of my remarks. Three individuals of the first church in Newton removed some ten or fifteen years since into the town of Brighton. About a year ago, they requested a dismission from that church, and a recommendation to the congregational church in the place of their residence. In answer to their request, the following absolute refusal was received.

"*Rev. and Dear Sir*,

"Your letter requesting the dismission and recommendation of three of our church members now residing in Brighton, has been laid before this church. After mature deliberation it was voted unanimously, 'that we do not comply with the request.' The reason for passing such a vote was not because the three individuals were not in *good* CHRISTIAN *standing among us;* but the *sole* reason was, because we considered a compliance with your request '*manifestly unsafe.*' In thus voting, we have followed the directions given in the Cambridge Platform. That expressly declares, 'if a member's departure be manifestly *unsafe* and SINFUL, the church may not assent thereunto."

Now had this said church read the whole of the paragraph from which this quotation is taken; and more especially, had they read a note by the orthodox editor of the new edition of the Platform at the bottom of another page, they would have been obliged to invent some other excuse for their refusal. The individuals concerned perused these remarks, and in strict compliance with the rules of the Platform, provided for their case, joined the first church in Brighton. Whereupon, a bull of excommunication was thundered forth from the pulpit of the first church in Newton. The same body have also more lately excommunicated two others for attending the communion of the unitarian church in Watertown. I would not insinuate that either of these measures, any more than many other late proceedings of the orthodox, have received the approbation of the worthy senior pastor of the first church in Newton. This, Sir, is but a specimen of a great number of cases of a similar character. And will you not pronounce this act uncongregational? Is not the first church in Brighton in as good and regular standing as it ever was? And where is the wisdom or the Christianity of such a proceeding? Let me suppose a parallel case. Suppose one of my church should remove into an orthodox parish, and request a dismission, and recommendation to the church in the place of his residence. Suppose my church should absolutely refuse to grant the request, and give as the sole reason of their conduct, that they considered a compliance manifestly *unsafe and sinful.* We could say this with as much right and more reason than it can be said by an orthodox church. For if the orthodox are sincere in their belief in the

doctrine of election, they could not fear for the *eternal* safety of their members; because no one can be condemned but the non-elect, and nothing can ever bring *them* to salvation. And, so far as regards my own observation, I could truly call it unsafe and sinful to place one of my church members under orthodox influence. For I have thought, in one or two instances of this kind which have occurred in other towns, that the individuals were made worse by admission into orthodox churches; worse, because they began soon to exhibit a self-righteous, censorious, uncharitable, condemning spirit; and did not observe altogether a strict regard to truth and honesty and fair-dealing. But should I be guilty of refusing to dismiss and recommend an individual, and proceed to excommunication, would you not pronounce the measure unchristian, illiberal, and oppressive? And is the same act any the less unchristian, illiberal, or oppressive, because perpetrated by an orthodox church?

The last circumstance to which I alluded is this. Orthodox seceders from unitarian churches have been guilty of the egregious folly of excommunicating those who remained, because they would not follow them to a new place of worship and communion. Many cases of this kind have recently occurred. The circumstances are so similar in the different places, that one example will be sufficient. The orthodox minister of a parish is either dismissed, or pays the debt of nature. The large majority of his hearers have become unitarians. While their pastor, he hedged up the entrance to the Lord's table with such high fences, that but few could overleap the human barriers. Of those who obtained admission, a respectable minority embrace unitarianism. The majority of orthodox communicants then secede; carry off the church records, plate, and Bible, which lawfully belong to the congregation; beg funds to erect a new house of worship, and proceed to excommunicate those who remain in the old meetinghouse. Such a statement appears so perfectly ridiculous and absurd, that my word will be doubted unless I give names and dates. Take the case then of the second church in Brookfield. The creed or covenant was originally so liberal, that Christians of different religious opinions could honestly give their assent to its requisitions. In 1825, the pastor introduced one, more orthodox, which was assented to by a majority of the members. A few years after, the orthodox minister was dismissed, and a unitarian settled in his place. A majority of the male church-members seceded, and held separate worship and communion. About three months after the ordination of the unitarian minister, the male members who remained were excommunicated from the *second church* by the seceders. And of what crimes were they accused? Among other things, the following were contained in the letter of exclusion; "neglect of duty in not attending public worship and communion seasons;" —"pretending to style themselves, *we the church*, and as such to hold

meetings and act independently of the church and pastor;" — "and whereas in disregard of covenant engagements, they refuse to walk with the church in the observance of Christian ordinances, and disclaim all connexion with the church; therefore *voted*, that they are gone out from us, and are no longer of us; that we hold ourselves absolved from covenant engagements to watch over them; and that they are hereby excluded from our fellowship and connexion." Now just notice this solemn trifling. Individuals are excommunicated for not attending worship and communion, for breaking covenant engagements, and for going out from the church; while it was a literal fact, that these very individuals had not left their usual place of worship, had not omitted the regular seasons of communion, had broken no covenant engagements, as they never signed the new orthodox creed, and had not gone out from any body whatever. On the other hand, those who passed the vote of exclusion had actually forsaken the church, and worship, and ordinances. But this is not the whole of this farcical business; after the vote of excommunication had been sent to the regular church members, a letter of warning and reproof was also forwarded to each of the excluded individuals. I will give a copy of the letter sent by this said body of seceders to ten females at a still later period.

"To Mrs. ———

"With unfeigned solicitude for your most precious interests, *the church* are constrained to request you very seriously to consider the feelings and conduct which have placed you in your present situation. With affectionate concern, we beg you in the calm hour of serious reflection, to ask conscience, whether from regard to the will and command of your Lord, or from *other* considerations, you have ceased to commune and worship with us in the profession of that faith, which in connecting yourself with this church, you publicly declared to be the ground of your hope in God? Is it a light matter to *break from a covenant so solemn* in its nature as that into which *you entered with the Lord and this church;* the obligations of which you voluntarily assumed, and before God and man you religiously promised to fulfil? Whatever *others* may *pretend*, do *you* feel, that with *safety*, you may release yourself at pleasure from the *bonds* of such a covenant; and without *any formality* adopt another essentially differing in articles of faith and rules of practice? Is this, we would ask, walking orderly as a member of Christ's church? And have you no *anxiety* how such a transaction is regarded by your Lord and Master? Let us not deceive ourselves. The whole of these proceedings will be reviewed in the great day. And in the realizing prospect of that awful scene, can you feel, that with an approving mind you will be able to answer to your Lord and Judge? *We pretend not to exercise dominion over your faith; nor would we retain you in our connexion contrary to your*

own inclinations. If we cannot walk by the same rule, it is best to be separate. Still we cannot but consider it *awfully dangerous* to trifle with *solemn vows.* And as one with whom we were associated in endearing bonds; with whom we took delight in going to the house of God, and to the table of our Lord; and whose departure has occasioned deep regret, we cannot but earnestly desire, that if you are in a *dangerous error*, as we honestly believe you to be, that you may be convinced of it and REPENT ere it be too late. And as the *last* expression of our faithfulness and regard, we entreat of you seriously to pause and consider."

Now to say nothing of the canting, whining, coaxing, threatening tenor of this letter, how perfectly farcical and ridiculous is the whole business! Let me suppose a parallel case, in order to bring these proceedings before you in their true complexion. Suppose, then, I should now introduce another covenant into my church, and succeed in obtaining the names of a majority of the members. Suppose my society should see cause to dismiss me next month from their employment. Suppose I should emigrate to Ohio, with the majority of male members who had signed the new creed. Suppose we should then and there call ourselves the second church in Waltham, and the Hollis or Shepard Society; and proceed to excommunicate the remaining minority, because they had not attended our meetings and communion seasons. Suppose we should accompany our vote of exclusion with a letter of warning and reproof and denunciation to every remaining individual, male and female. Now this would be a parallel case; for whether we remove three miles or three hundred, the principle is precisely the same. And should we adopt such a measure, would you not pronounce us either foolish or fanatical? And does not such a proceeding destroy all religious freedom? I well know, that, in this vicinity, the excommunications and denunciations of the orthodox are little feared or regarded. But such is not the fact in all parts of our country; and where any one is deterred from thinking and acting freely in religious matters by the fear of man, there can be no religious freedom. I must therefore conclude that the causes of excommunication from orthodox churches are destructive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism.

In the *third* place, look at the *rights* claimed and exercised by orthodox churches. *Three* circumstances strike me as peculiarly unchristian and oppressive. One is this. Orthodox churches claim and exercise the right of determining who is qualified to obey the last injunction of our Saviour. And from whom do you derive this power? From the Head of the church? No, he has delegated no such authority to any man or any body of men. But I suppose you will contend that every associated body has a right to decide upon the character of its members. This may be true in most societies; but the Lord's Supper is a very

different affair. Jesus is the sole Master of the feast. He has given out his invitations; and every man must determine for himself whether he is qualified to accept. And the idea, so often advanced by the orthodox, that they cannot sit down to the communion with heretics, seems to me to proceed on a very mistaken view of the ordinance. When I approach the Lord's table, I do not look around to ascertain how many of the guests are unworthy to be in my company. I do not say in my thoughts, There is one, who believes a little less than I do, and he ought to be excluded; and there is another, who believes a little more than I do, and he ought also to be excluded; on my right is one, who takes more ardent spirit than I do, and he should be excluded; and on my left is another, who prays less in his family than I do in mine, and he should likewise be excluded; in that pew is one, who has not been so thoroughly drenched in the waters of baptism as I have, and he must be excluded; and on that seat is another, who has not received so much spiritual influence as I have, and he must surely be excluded. No; when I sit down to commemorate the sufferings and death of my Saviour, my business is with his instructions and example, and with my own heart and character. If I am faithful to my own soul, I fear no contamination from my neighbours, and incur no guilt in the sight of God. With the opinions and religious observances of the other guests, I have no concern. They are answerable for themselves. I have no authority to take care of them, nor have they any right to interfere with me. I merely wish to imitate the example of the infallible Teacher. When he instituted this ordinance, he sat down with twelve disciples, whom he knew to be ignorant of the true spiritual nature of his kingdom. He knew that the whole number would soon desert him in the hour of peril. He knew that one would deny him with an oath. He knew that another would betray him to the death. And with this knowledge, he distributed to them the consecrated elements, and even passed the sop to his very betrayer. He has thus left an example of the most unbounded charity for the imitation of all future ages. Whenever a person wishes to comply with the dying request of his Saviour, if he takes the Scriptures for the guide of his faith and practice, and gives evidence of a good moral character, no man and no body of men, have any right to forbid his attendance at the ordinance. And for my own part, I should rather be in the situation of the most degraded Hottentot at the day of judgment, than in the condition of that Christian, who has excluded a sincere and humble follower of Jesus from the table of his Master. I must consider this measure unchristian and oppressive.

The next circumstance to which I alluded is this. Orthodox churches claim and exercise the right of choosing the minister. This claim has been asserted in some of your late publications, And more than all, you have proceeded to act on this principle. You have erected several new churches in this commonwealth, and have so bound them down

with trust deeds, that no proprietor is allowed to vote for the minister he must support, unless he has been voted into the number of communicants. How would this rule operate in our old societies? Take Carlisle for an example. The late minister of that place preached thorough-going orthodoxy, and would not admit unitarians into his pulpit. At his death there were thee male members in the church; two of them orthodox and one liberal. Now according to your plan, these two have the right to elect a new pastor; and if the society are dissatisfied with their choice, they must retire and leave these two in the peaceable possession of the meeting-house and church property. When you can persuade the great mass of our citizens to acknowledge their inability and incapacity to elect their own religious teachers, your law will go into full operation; and not till then. This claim of the orthodox is really too absurd to merit a moment's discussion. I therefore leave it for you to make the public believe that they are to enjoy religious liberty, after they have surrendered the right of choosing the ministers they are obliged to support.

The last circumstance to which I alluded is this. Majorities in orthodox churches claim and exercise the right of holding all church property. This principle may be illustrated by the actual proceedings of several such majorities. Take the case of the church in this place. An orthodox minister was settled upon the condition that he should leave whenever two thirds of the voters should so decide. After five years' ministrations, the question was taken. But fifteen votes from more than one hundred voters, could be obtained for his continuance. The contract was therefore legally annulled. He left the house with five male members. They took the records; the plate, which had been presented by the agent of the manufacturing company, a man of known unitarian sentiments; and the Bible, which had been purchased by a subscription among the ladies. Loud complaints were published that this church had been driven from their house of worship; when they owned not a cent of property in the building, and might have remained there in the enjoyment of every Christian right and privilege. They soon published a creed, calling themselves the Trinitarian Congregational Church of Waltham. This same thing has been done in several instances during the past year; although the Supreme Court have repeatedly decided that such seceders have no right to the church property. These decisions were known at the very time by those who openly violated the laws of the Commonwealth. How you can call such conduct consistent with being peaceable snd obedient subjects of the government, is more than I can understand. And how you can reconcile the practice of setting up a human creed, so that but few can subscribe it, and then allowing those few to hold the property of the congregation, is also inexplicable to me on any Christian ground. I well know that the orthodox are aiming to have the laws of the State

so altered, that a majority of the communicants shall hold all church property. And unless I am greatly mistaken, a very deep plot is laid for obtaining possession of our unitarian churches and funds. I have reasons for this surmise in a circumstance which has already occurred. The facts in the case are briefly these. In a unitarian parish, resided several orthodox individuals. All at once they requested admission to the unitarian church. The minister was so surprised, that he asked them if they were in earnest. They affirmed their sincerity, and were accordingly admitted. They then seceded, and called themselves the first church, and claimed the large funds of that body. They even endeavoured to have a council called to dismiss the pastor of the regular church and society. Now this short statement will serve to unfold the whole plot. You are establishing orthodox churches in unitarian parishes. You make them up of individuals from different and even distant places. Of the ten male members who compose the orthodox church in this place, there are individuals residing in four or five different towns. Well, get your law altered so that a majority of male communicants shall hold the meeting-house and funds, and then let all the orthodox members apply for admission into the unitarian church. There would be nothing in the creed or covenant to which they could object; and unitarians could not consistently refuse their request. Then they might vote the minority and the whole society out of house and home, and take possession of all church property. I can only say, that I hope this suspicion is altogether groundless; but I have more evidence, satisfactory to my own mind, than I have here advanced, or than I care to mention. For their is little probability that you will ever succeed in getting the law altered. I think I have adduced sufficient evidence to satisfy any one that orthodox churches have converted themselves into ecclesiastical courts, and adopted measures and claimed rights inconsistent with free inquiry and religious liberty.

In the *fourth* place, look at the orthodox *conferences of churches.* As these are new combinations, I will give some account of their formation, proceedings, and tendency. A number of orthodox ministers induce their several churches to unite in a conference; and subject themselves to certain definite regulations. They hold quarterly meetings in their respective places of residence, which are fully attended from all the branches of the connexion. They have preaching, praying, exhortation, reports of the state of religion, communion, and contributions for feeble churches. Their transactions are published in some religious newspaper, so far as it can be effected without exposing some of their worst features. Now *four* circumstances strike me as peculiarly unchristian and injurious in these conferences of churches. One is this. The progress of religion is measured by an unchristian standard. You hear nothing said of the increase of peace, love, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, patience, forbearance,

family concord and harmony. But I will forbear. I have before me the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Hildreth on this subject. As he is not a party man, as he is not classed with unitarians, as he expresses the convictions of several orthodox ministers, I shall use his words as expressing my own sentiments.

"In the *first* place, I object to conferences of churches, because I consider them unfavorable to congregational order — to the liberty, or independence of individual churches.

"A *conference of churches* consists of a number of churches associated together for certain purposes by a written compact — by articles adopted by each church. Delegates are chosen by the churches respectively and sent with their pastors to the conference; and delegates from other conferences are also admitted. So far as I know, the articles of conference do not expressly delegate any ecclesiastical authority; but every body can see, that ecclesiastical authority and influence necessarily result from the organization. If no such authority or influence whatever had been intended by the *projectors*, I very much doubt, if the organization would ever have been made. * * * * * * * *

"In the *second* place, church conferences are a novelty — an experiment. They are a human contrivance, and they set up a new standard of ministerial and Christian character, which the Head of the Church, in my view, has not authorized. It will be safe to remain out of them.

"In the *third* place, there is a display in these conferences, which I greatly dislike, and which is adapted to foster the erroneous impression, that religion is very low and languid, unless it makes a great deal of show and sound. In this land of Bibles, of Sabbaths, of public worship and instruction, I see no call for the whole, or the half of a county's coming together from time to time, to discuss the state of religion, to hear some great preacher from abroad, and to be excited by a great occasion. If we cannot learn the way of salvation within our own houses, and under Christian ministrations within our own parishes, I am persuaded, we shall never learn it at all. And I consider the occasions in question, as highly unfavorable to the usefulness of parish ministers — unfavorable to the steady, gentle, and therefore the most salutary influence of the ordinary services of the Sabbath day. I believe, that experience will show, and has already shown, that no conference of churches is broken up without numbers going away less fitted to receive and relish the plain and wholesome instruction of their ministers at home.

"In the *fourth* place, conferences of churches are calculated, as I believe, to diminish the dignity, as well as the salutary influence of the Christian ministry, by bringing forward, more than is for their own spiritual good, a class of *lay brethren*, who have great need of learning meekness and modesty at home, instead of coming before the public, to make speeches about the state of religion."

I will add but one further observation on this topic. The liberty of individual churches is destroyed by these conferences. Yes; I regard

the orthodox conferences of churches as but another name for consociations. They bring ministers and churches into utter servitude. This is acknowledged by some of the worthy orthodox divines of this state; and on this account they will have no part nor lot in such measures. Their tyrannical power has not yet been exercised to any very great extent; but let one minister of their body become unitarian, and he would be tried and punished for his honest opinions. Let a church attempt to hear a unitarian candidate, and they would soon learn that their liberty was sacrificed. I hope the public will awake to this most alarming encroachment on congregational rights, equality, and independency. I hope parishes will no longer suffer themselves to be slandered by their ministers and neighbours, simply because they have not assented to the articles of a human creed. I hope churches will discover the snare set for the destruction of their rights of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism.

I have room for no more facts under this head. What then must be our conclusion? Do not the facts I have stated fully prove, that the leaders of the orthodox party have attempted to establish, and in several instances have actually established, ecclesiastical tribunals, so that the supposed mistakes and errors of ministers and private Christians have been tried and punished as heresies; that is, as crimes? And do not the same facts fully prove, that such tribunals are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? I must conclude that both propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

IV. MEASURES FOR ORGANIZING AND ESTABLISHING FEEBLE CHURCHES.

In the *fourth* place, I invite your attention to the measures adopted by the orthodox for organizing and establishing feeble churches in unitarian parishes. I think the facts, which I shall adduce under this head, will prove the two following propositions. First, that the measures recently adopted for increasing the number of orthodox churches are unchristian. And, secondly, that such measures are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but five different classes of facts under this general division.

1. *Measures for organizing a feeble Church. First.* Look at the measures adopted by orthodox leaders to organize a feeble church in a unitarian parish. The circumstances are generally these. There are a few orthodox individuals, principally females, in unitarian societies. These are visited by orthodox ministers, and urged to secede and form themselves into an evangelical church. Others are pointed out who are supposed to be wavering, and these are also treated in the same manner. They are assured that their present pastor does not preach the truth, but is leading his people to destruction. They are cautioned to conceal from their husbands the contemplated separation, and told that opposition must be expected in the cause of God. Having enlisted

a small party, a day is appointed for the organization of the feeble church. Orthodox ministers are present; some of them bring their own church members, to help make up a decent number for the new body. In this way the evangelical church is organized, consisting of some four or more females, and perhaps one or more males, residents in the place; and several males and females from neighbouring and distant towns. And it is a well known fact, that in most instances, the seceders from unitarian churches, have been urged to this measure by the conversation, preaching, and writings of orthodox ministers. Such are some of the measures adopted for organizing feeble churches in this commonwealth.

Now is this conduct of the orthodox leaders truly Christian? Is this doing, as you would wish unitarian ministers to do unto you? Were you ordained over a united parish, should you wish unitarian preachers to come into your society, visit among your people, assure your hearers that you were leading them to hell blindfold, and urge them to separate from your communion, and form themselves into a liberal church? This question was put to one of your leaders while engaged in this work of division. And what answer do you suppose he returned to the unitarian minister? These are the words. "O you cannot do this, for it is contrary to your principles." Is this a sufficient excuse? Suppose my neighbour should come to my barn, and take away my cow. Suppose I should discover him while engaged in the business, and ask him, if he was doing towards me as he should wish me to do unto him? Suppose he should answer, "O you cannot do this, for it is contrary to your principles." Because my principles would not permit me to steal, does this excuse my neighbour's theft? Are not such measures truly subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism?

2. *Measures for erecting a meetinghouse for a feeble church. Secondly.* Look at some of the orthodox measures for erecting a place of worship for a feeble church. Take the proceedings in relation to the one in Billerica, since you sanctioned them by preaching the sermon at the dedication. The circumstances are briefly these. A few years since, the leaders of your party, and the members of the Andover Association generally, determined that an orthodox church must be established in this peculiarly united and peaceable town. The last year, the Rev. Drs. Beecher and Fay, and Mr. Bennett, proceeded to organize a feeble body, collected mostly from neighbouring communions. A house of worship is then needed. And how can it be obtained? The members of the society by great pinching raise something like two hundred dollars; and one hundred more is literally extorted from a single lady by over-persuasion. The Rev. Mr. Bennett is employed to raise the remainder by hard begging. He accordingly rides most of the summer, and visits many of the towns in this Commonwealth. He had prepared

a very peculiar discourse, of which I have received several abstracts. I will therefore give you some of his remarks in his own words. "I stand before you as a beggar for Billerica. I have vowed to the Lord, that I will obtain sufficient funds to build a meetinghouse in that place. There is great need of one. The gospel has not been preached there for fifty years. Religion and morals are at a very low ebb. They have no sabbath. The town is a moral waste. It is a proper missionary station. The people are in a heathenish condition. No longer ago than three years, there was but one Christian in the place, and *she was a female.* But the neighbouring ministers have taken pity on their deplorable condition. Several converts have been made by my instrumentality. I call them my children. And they want a meeting-house. It is your duty to give to this object. It is your duty to send the gospel to the heathen at home as well as the heathen abroad. Give. If you have no money, give something else. Give your watches, your necklaces, your finger-rings. If you cannot give a spike, give a nail; if you cannot give a nail, give a brad." Perhaps you will think I have exaggerated his statements. But I have put down the very words and phrases that proceeded from his mouth; and respectable men in all parts of the Commonwealth stand ready to testify to the truth and accuracy of my record.

Now in view of all these measures, you came and dedicated the house, although you were obliged to bespeak and pay for your dinner on the occasion. And after a suitable man was selected for this missionary station, some thirty ministers of your party aided in his ordination, and then bound themselves to contribute about two thirds of his salary for a limited time. And all this mountain labor for what purpose? The number of hearers ranges from five to fifty, taking men, women, and children; and the fair average in good weather is from thirty to forty. The larger part of them could be accommodated with orthodox preaching much nearer in neighbouring towns. And because the heathen people in Billerica will not permit your missionary to insult them in their own houses, the cry of persecution is raised. Will the public sanction these orthodox measures? Can you expect the blessing of God upon a church erected by such means? Is this the way that Christ propagated his religion? I wish all concerned would read the history of his life, with a particular reference to his measures for spreading the true faith.

Now, Sir, what do you think of such proceedings? I say *you;* for I have no disposition to cast the blame of this affair on Mr. Bennet. What I should consider heinous crime in another, I regard as lamentable misfortune in him. I have no hesitation in attributing his ludicrous movements, his ridiculous statements, his base misrepresentations, his aggravated offences against all decency, to some mental disorder. Neither would I be so unjust as to blame the orthodox generally for

this outrage upon the peace and reputation of a highly distinguished country village. For I know full well that very many of the more sober members of your denomination have taken no part nor lot in this matter; but have spoken of the course pursued with marked disapprobation. I also know that some clergymen have been unwilling to let him preach his begging discourse in their pulpits. I likewise know, that one orthodox association requested Dr. Church to write to some individual in this vicinity, and persuade him to *regulate* Mr. Bennett's movements; and that Dr. Codman was mentioned as a suitable person for such business. But I wish the public censure to rest on those individuals who employ this man to say and do things which they dare not utter and transact themselves. And who are they? Why, the leaders of the orthodox denomination. For when this man arose on one occasion to deliver his slanders on Harvard College, he read a commission from the committee of the Pastoral Association. This association is composed of most of the orthodox ministers in the Commonwealth. Their committee consists of such men as Dr. Codman and some of the Boston clergy. Let it then be known, that a few Doctors in divinity have employed this man to raise funds for the erection of new churches for feeble orthodox societies; and that he acts under your commission.

If the community will countenance such proceedings, we have no safety for our reputation as individuals or towns. First Billerica is slandered most grossly; for it is well known that it stands far above most of the orthodox towns in the county for mental, moral, and religious improvement. And had the same remarks been made concerning an individual, the Reverend gentleman would have been prosecuted for defamation of character. Next comes Cambridge, and the venom of the orthodox party against the ancient university in that place, is poured out over the whole Commonwealth. Legal gentlemen have pronounced his statements slanderous and actionable; but the instrument is considered too contemptible for prosecution. Whose turn will come next, I know not. I hope orthodox Christians, who despise the principle, that the end sanctifies the means, will raise their voice upon such subjects. For it becomes them to remember, that the same crusade might be waged against the peace and reputation of their own societies, were the unitarians sufficiently bewildered to engage in such an undertaking. And every man must pronounce these measures unchristian, and inconsistent with free inquiry and religious liberty.

3. *Measures for filling the new meetinghouse. Thirdly.* Look at some of the measures adopted by the orthodox for filling the new house of worship. An appeal is made to some of the lowest principles of human nature. In almost every town, there are more or fewer individuals who are at variance, either with their minister, or with his warm friends. They are ready to pursue a course which may prove injurious

to their supposed enemies. Such persons are visited by the orthodox leaders, and assured that their secession must weaken and help to destroy the old society. Thus an appeal is made to the principle of revenge. — In almost every town, there are more or fewer individuals who love their money better than their religion. They are for ever complaining of the burden of their taxes; and are always ready to secede when it can be done without the sacrifice of too much popularity. Such persons are visited by the orthodox leaders; and promised an exemption from ministerial taxes for a certain period; and after that time, nothing but their voluntary contributions will be required. Thus an appeal is made to the principle of avarice. — In almost every town, there are more or fewer individuals who think themselves too much neglected. They complain, either that their minister has not paid them sufficient attention, or that their fellow-citizens have not noticed them according to their deserts. Such persons are visited, and treated with a comfortable dose of flattery, and made to believe that they shall be of the first importance in the new society. Thus an appeal is made to the principle of vanity. — In almost every town, there are more or fewer individuals, who have no fixed religious opinions. They wish to be very good, and are afraid of being too liberal in their sentiments. Such persons are visited, being mostly females, and are assured that the orthodox is at least the safest course; that there can be no danger on their ground; while they are exposed to imminent peril so long as they remain unitarian. Thus an appeal is made to the principle of fear. — In these several ways, some few are obtained to fill up the new meetinghouse. And this brief statement will also serve to explain the circumstance, that in your new and feeble societies, there are so many varieties of opinion and character. It is a well known fact, that the large majority are females, that some of the males are unitarians, some universalists, some nothingarians, and some unbelievers. Let unitarian preachers adopt similar measures in orthodox parishes, and would not their success be a hundred-fold?

4. *Measures for supporting the feeble society. Fourthly.* Look at the measures adopted for the support of the feeble society. A system of begging must be practised for the maintenance of the minister. His parishioners are taxed to the full extent of their ability; and then contributions and subscriptions are occasionally solicited to make up some deficiencies. Persons who attend the ordination are attacked, and bind themselves and their societies to contribute so much annually for five years. An appeal is also made to the Domestic Missionary Society, which has large funds for this very object. Besides all these means, it is generally understood, that a large fund has been raised for the express purpose of establishing and maintaining orthodox societies within the borders of unitarian parishes. In these several ways, the minister receives a comfortable subsistence.

In order to increase the number of hearers, the minister adopts several singular measures. He calls upon unitarian families, and requests them to come and hear his reasons for being settled over the new society. He visits others, and assures them that their pastor is not converted, that he does not preach the gospel, that he feels no affection for their souls. He assures them that their pastor does not preach his real sentiments, that he does not believe the sentiments he advances, that he is a universalist or an infidel. He assures them, that their pastor is not a minister of Christ, that his communicants do not constitute a Christian church, and that his ordinances are not Christian institutions. He assures them, that their pastor is a blind guide, has renounced the grand doctrines of the Reformation, and widely departed from the principles of the Pilgrim fathers. He assures them, that he shall regard no parish limits, but endeavour to convert all who are not already orthodox in sentiment. In this way, he disgusts many, and probably frightens a few into his system of operations.

But the great instrument of increase is a revival; and for the production of one of these religious excitements, the minister and his church labor incessantly. For they are aware that there are some thoughtless persons who may be easily drawn in by such a system of operations. And the character of the minister, as a successful pastor, depends on his success in getting up these excitements. If he should not be able after one or two years to accomplish this object, he is dismissed from his society. And what is the reason assigned? Simply this. "We do not think you well adapted to build up a new society." Yes; let a minister over one of your feeble churches, be as eloquent and faithful as Paul, let him be really instrumental in making those who attend his ministry pious Christians; still he will be dismissed unless he is successful in drawing from the unitarian society. I have been astonished, when I have seen young men of ingenuous feelings, and good abilities, and respectable acquirements, thus blindly led about by the chiefs of your party, and subjected to such a life of slavery and degradation. I can account for the fact, only on the supposition that the number of orthodox candidates is large, and that they imbibe largely of the party spirit of their instructers. Now just suppose that unitarians should adopt similar measures in orthodox societies. Would you call them the most Christian, and the most liberal?

5. *Reasons for establishing new Churches. Fifthly.* Look at some of the reasons for establishing new orthodox churches. What can they be? Do you establish these feeble churches for the salvation of souls? No; you will not pretend to give this reason. For in your creed the doctrine of election is fully declared. This teaches that God has chosen a certain, limited number for heaven, and foreordained the remainder to an everlasting hell. It also teaches that the number of the elect is *definite*, so that neither more nor less can be saved. This

doctrine is still retained in its original import. In a tract lately published, said to have been written by Dr. Beecher, the principal agent in this work of disorganization, I find these words. "Some he, God, saves. There is a *part* he rescues from themselves and from perdition. THIS NUMBER IS DEFINITE." Now if you say, the number of the elect is not definite, you give up the Calvinistic doctrine of election. And if you allow that the number is definite, then you must admit, that not one soul more will be saved, by the establishment of your feeble churches. No; none but the elect can be saved, and they will be received to heaven at any rate; and none but the reprobate can be damned, and they must go to hell in spite of orthodox exertions. So that if you are consistent in your belief of the doctrine of election, you will never pretend that your new churches have been organized for the salvation of souls.

Will you say that the seceders from unitarian congregations were ever deprived of a single Christian right? Let us descend to particulars. Were such seceders denied the Christian name? No; so long as they professed their belief in a divine revelation, and exhibited a Christian character, this name was cheerfully granted to them. Were they denied access to the Christian ordinances? No; if they gave Scriptural evidence of being true believers, their children were willingly baptized, and they were cordially welcomed to the Lord's table. Were they denounced week after week as infidels, and coolly consigned to endless burnings for their honest opinions? No; they were never condemned for studying and understanding the Scriptures for themselves. Were they obliged to hear doctrines advocated which shocked their very souls? No; their complaint has usually been, that the unitarian preacher did not go far enough; that so far as he went, he was very good. And I have no doubt, that if they had judged our Saviour's preaching by the same rule, they would have come to the same conclusion. In short, can you mention a Christian right of which seceders from unitarian churches were ever deprived by their liberal brethren? If not, you will not pretend that your new societies are formed, so that the seceders can enjoy their Christian rights.

Now how very different is the treatment of those unitarians who reside in orthodox societies! They are denied the Christian name, and denounced as unbelievers. They are denied access to the Christian ordinances, and condemned for their honest interpretations of Scripture. They are held up in orthodox prayers and sermons, as objects of man's pity and God's displeasure. They are deliberately sentenced to hell for obeying Christ to the best of their understanding. And at this very moment, many orthodox ministers receive more than half their support from unitarian funds; for a majority of their parishes have embraced unitarian sentiments. And were unitarians to imitate the example of the orthodox, in establishing a new church wherever a few

individuals could be collected, they might form more than a thousand unitarian societies forthwith. And are not the deprivations and persecutions to which they are subjected by orthodox tyranny sufficient to justify them in such an undertaking?

Perhaps you will ask, if the orthodox have not a perfect right to adopt measures for the propagation of their peculiar faith. Undoubtedly. You have a right to adopt and pursue any *Christian* measures. But will you call all the measures which I have mentioned truly Christian? Should you wish me to come into your united and peaceable society, and create divisions in families, neighbourhoods, and churches? especially, if my creed assured me that not one more soul would be saved by all my exertions. Should you wish me to travel from town to town, slandering your parish, exciting the pity of the community for your heathen condition, in order to obtain funds for the erection of a new house of worship for some thirty or forty seceders? Would this be doing as you would wish me to do unto you? If not, you cannot call such measures Christian. And if they are not Christian, can you expect the blessing of God upon such labors? Can you believe that a God of truth and righteousness will prosper churches which have been established by intrigue, and denunciation, and misrepresentation, and extortion? I know that the miser is so prospered as to become rich in gold. But he is generally cursed by his very wealth. And I am constrained to believe, that many of your feeble churches will prove a curse to your denomination. At first they may spring up like the seed sown among thorns, and on stony ground, and by the wayside; but they will wither away and perish before the rising sun of truth and righteousness.

What then must be our conclusion? Do not the facts which I have stated fully prove, that the measures of the orthodox for establishing feeble churches are unchristian? And do they not also fully prove, that such measures are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? I must conclude that both propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

V. Denunciations.

In the fifth place, I invite your attention to some of the orthodox denunciations of unitarians. I think the quotations I shall make from the writings of your authors will prove the two following distinct propositions. First, that the leaders of your party have denied unitarians almost every Christian right, and called them by almost every unchristian name. And, secondly, that all such uncharitable revilings are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but twelve different classes of orthodox denunciations under this general head, though I could easily increase the number to twelve times twelve.

1. *The Orthodox deny Unitarians the Christian Name. First.* Look at those passages in which orthodox writers have denied unitarians the Christian name. My first extract shall be from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims." "I have no hesitation in saying, that were the orthodox, with their creed and views, *to treat unitarians as if they believed them to be Christians*, and in a safe state, they would indeed be guilty of the most atrocious cruelty that one moral agent could well manifest towards another." There is very little danger, that any of the writers in this periodical journal will ever be punished for their cruelty of treating unitarians as if they believed them to be Christians.

My second quotation shall be from the Letters of Canonicus. "That those, who, understanding at the time what they say, deny the original and entire corruption of the human heart, the divinity and atonement of Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, gratuitous pardon through the merits of the Redeemer, and the everlasting punishment of the impenitent, *are Christians*, *they* [the orthodox] *cannot concede*, without renouncing *all their main principles.*" That the orthodox cannot call unitarians Christians without renouncing all their main principles, reminds me of the observation of a zealous lady of your denomination; who declared, that if she gave up her total depravity, she must renounce *all* her religion.

My last passage shall be from your friend, Dr. Miller. "You are prepared, I hope, to decide promptly, and without wavering, that *unitarians are by no means to be considered as Christians*, in any scriptural sense of the word. Rely on it, my friends, unitarians have been too long courteously called Christians, and recognised as such by the orthodox around them. We have too long suffered the principles of worldly politeness to betray us into unfaithfulness to the cause of our master." I hope neither you nor your friends will sorrow immoderately, that the principles of worldly politeness have betrayed you into too charitable treatment of your unitarian brethren. I can offer you but one word of consolation under your deep penitence for the aggravated crime. It becomes you to remember, that this very conduct which you lament was foreordained by your God, and that he will excuse you for not doing better than he had decreed, because he withheld from you the necessary power and ability.

Now argument is useless on this question. When I hear a person declare his firm belief in the divine origin of Christianity, and see him take the Scriptures as his only infallible rule of faith and practice, and search them with honesty and perseverance and devotion, and exhibit a holy temper and character, and manifest a willingness even to lay down his life in defence of his religious faith, my conscience compels me to grant him the Christian name, although he rejects some of the most precious articles of my belief. And if the

conscience of the orthodox does not move them to perform this act of justice towards their liberal brethren; if it does not require them to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, no reasoning can ever induce them to perform this duty, or convince them of this error. I therefore leave you to decide the question, how such a denial, for no better reasons, can be consistent with free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. Have not unitarians the same Scriptural right, and as much reason, to deny the Christian name to the orthodox denomination?

2. *The Orthothox deny Unitarians the Christian Character. Secondly.* Look at those passages in which orthodox writers have denied unitarians the Christian character, and endeavoured to make the community believe they were irreligious and immoral in their lives. My first quotation shall be from the sermon of your friend, Dr. Beecher, at Worcester. "It requires no proof, but universal observation, to support the position, that the irreligious, immoral, and voluptuous part of the community prefer the liberal system, and are vehement in their opposition to the evangelical system. If this assertion needs confirmation, assemble the pleasure-loving and licentious community of the world; the patrons of balls, and theatres, and masquerades; and if they support the preaching of any system of doctrines, is it not substantially the liberal system?" When the Reverend Doctor wrote this paragraph, he probably forgot, that several of the orthodox cities in our country support more than four times as many theatres, and balls, and masquerades, as the unitarian city of Boston; and that the state of morals in this liberal city, according to its population, is very much superior to that of most of the evangelical cities in the union.

My next quotation shall be from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims." "Unitarianism, as a system, is very agreeable to the natural, unhumbled heart, is specially adapted to the tastes and inclinations of the gay, thoughtless, and fashionable world, *denying them no liberties or gratifications which come any where within the bounds of decency, while it quiets their consciences with the name and forms of religion*, and allays the fear of death by promising happiness beyond the grave; and it will not be thought strange, with all this variety of adaptation, preparation, and influence, that *a considerable number of individuals and churches were secretly, and it may be almost imperceptibly*, CORRUPTED." Now I was not before aware, that most of our civil fathers were such vile, corrupted characters. One of your writers has been looking over the Registers for several of the last years, and he is astonished to find that almost all our public officers have belonged to the liberal party. And he sums up the result of his investigations in this sentence. "*And more than nine tenths of the political influence is in the hands of the unitarians.*" I rejoice in the orthodox authority for this fact, for two reasons. First, every man can look to our public men, and de-

termine if the nine unitarians are wicked characters, while the one orthodox is the only godly officer. And secondly, persons at a distance will readily conclude, that the wisest, ablest, and best men are elected to office in Massachusetts; and accordingly determine that unitarians sustain the fairest reputation in the land.

My two last quotations shall be, one from the "Recorder," and the other from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims." "By his writings for ten years past, Dr. Channing has taken the lead among the enemies of the orthodox; and who are the enemies of the orthodox? Why, every infidel, and disorganizer, and sabbath-breaker, and debauchee, and gambler, and every haunter of grogshops and theatres in the land. The orthodox are honored with the uniform and unrelenting hatred of all the haters of good order, the haters of virtue, the haters of God." What, my dear Sir, Dr. Channing at the head of a party which includes all these vile characters? and is this the way to answer his arguments? And now for the passage from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims." "We cannot contemplate the career of Dr. Channing but with extreme pain. He was once a very serious-minded man, a professed believer in what we deem the religion of the Bible. But of this faith he has made shipwreck, and has been among the first to let in that flood of infidelity, which, under a fashionable name, has swept over the altars of New England. When licentiousness has reached its height in our land, and a jubilee is proclaimed *to those in the upper classes of society who have hitherto been withheld by public opinion from an open renunciation of the sabbath*, Dr. Channing will be referred to as the gifted mind, who, with commendable caution, first unloosed the yoke of a superstitious observance. *May it appear in the judgment that he fled at last to that cross as his only hope, and that he did not go into eternity till the blood shed for the remission of sins was applied to his soul, and his peace was made with God through the atonement of his Son.*" Such language can excite nothing but pity for the writer in the mind of every decent person of any denomination. It is not in the power of man to produce stronger evidence of the weakness of the orthodox cause, and the wickedness of orthodox writers in thus judging the *hearts* of their brethren.

Now if the members of your denomination were free from failings, imperfections, and sins, you would have some excuse for thus passing upon your fellow Christians sentence of condemnation. But you cannot justly lay claim to any such exemptions; and although it does not become me to speak of the external conduct and character of the orthodox, I may quote a few lines from an article in the last American Quarterly Review, written by a Christian who rejects unitarianism, and who has had much opportunity for observation. "Admitting that there are pure and bright examples of a good life among the terrorists, not however more or better than are found among their opponents; if we

look at them individually, we shall see them, generally, as devoted to worldly wealth and enjoyments; as solicitous for distinction and influence; as easily and happily puffed up with pride and conceit; and as mere creatures of flesh, as those they pity or spurn, because, forsooth, their pretensions to sanctity are not so lofty, or their notions of Christianity so mysterious as their own; nor their observances and deportment squared by the rule they have adopted. They are as impatient of injuries; as vindictive in their passions; as unforgiving in their temper; as keen, close, and avaricious in their dealings; as hard creditors; as inflexible and unpitying in exacting their rights." Will any man in your party dare to affirm that this is not the literal truth? When you or any one of your friends can feel that you are without sin, then will it be time enough to condemn a large, and respectable, and virtuous denomination as irreligious, immoral, and unchristian. And how far you can reconcile such a practice with free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism, must be left to your own decision. Remember that unitarians have the same right and as much reason to deny the Christian character to the orthodox denomination.

3. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarian Ministers are not Ministers of the Gospel. Thirdly.* Look at those passages in which orthodox bodies have declared that unitarian preachers were not ministers of the gospel. One extract will be sufficient in this case; more especially, since it contains the opinion of a numerous body of orthodox clergy and delegates. "In the present state of our country, whilst unitarian errors, in various forms, are making their insiduous approaches; whilst the advocates of this heresy, in many cases, are practising a system of concealment, and insinuating themselves into the confidence of multitudes who have no suspicion of their defection from the faith, the Assembly feel it to be their duty to speak without reserve. It is the deliberate and unanimous opinion of this Assembly, that those who renounce the fundamental doctrine of the trinity, and deny that Jesus Christ is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father, *cannot be recognised as ministers of the gospel, and that their ministrations are wholly invalid.*" How you can reconcile such proceedings with the principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism, is more than I can comprehend. Remember that unitarians have the same right and equal reason to deny orthodox preachers to be ministers of the Gospel.

4. *The Orthodox assert that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, when administered by Unitarians, are not Christian Ordinances. Fourthly.* Look at those passages in which orthodox writers have denied the name of *Christian ordinances* to the baptism and supper when celebrated by unitarian Christians. One or two extracts from your friend Dr. Miller, will be sufficient for my present purpose. "You are prepared, I

hope, to decide, promptly and without wavering, that *their ordinances* are to be held unworthy of regard as *Christian* institutions. With respect to the validity of *sealing ordinances* administered by unitarians, the highest judicatory of the church to which we belong has given a decision, which ought to be generally known. In the year 1814 a question was laid before the General Assembly, in the following words. A person who had been baptized in his infancy by Dr. Priestley, applied for admission to the Lord's Table. Ought the baptism administered by Dr. Priestley, then a unitarian, to be considered as valid? The Assembly after mature deliberation, decided as follows. *Resolved*, that this question be answered in the negative; and it was accordingly determined in the negative." I have known several instances of late occurrence, in which the orthodox have rebaptized unitarian church members, and admitted them to their communion only as new converts. I can only ask you to reconcile such votes and proceedings with the principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism. Remember that unitarians have the same right, and as much reason, to deny the validity and Christian appellation of the ordinances administered by orthodox ministers.

5. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians spread their Sentiments by Concealment. Fifthly.* Look at those numerous passages, in which orthodox writers accuse unitarians of spreading their peculiar opinions by *concealment.* One sentence from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims" will be sufficient for my present purpose. "Unitarianism, it is well known, was introduced and propagated in this country by *conccalment.*" Is this true? For my own part, I am free to confess, that I have never understood the meaning of this charge. Concealment! What do you mean by the term? Do you mean, that unitarian ministers concealed orthodoxy from their hearers, and thus introduced unitarianism? If so, how do you account for the well known fact, that a large majority of many congregations have embraced unitarianism, to whom their own ministers never preached any thing but rigid orthodoxy, and would permit none but orthodox preachers to officiate in their pulpits? That such has been the result in many societies in this commonwealth, you have already received abundant testimony; and that such is the condition of many more parishes over whom exclusive pastors are still settled, you will ere long have still more demonstrative evidence. If then such be your meaning, please to reconcile this notorious truth, with your oft repeated accusation. Do you mean that unitarian ministers concealed unitarianism from their hearers? Where then did they obtain a knowledge of it? You admit that they have received it, and still believe it true? From the Bible? And is this a good reason why they should renounce it? Or is it any less valuable because derived from this sacred source? Are people to believe nothing but what comes from their preachers? I know your friend Dr. Miller has

exhorted all the orthodox to consider the preaching of unitarians as blasphemy, and to avoid their publications as they would a cup of poison. If then this be your meaning, please to reconcile the well known fact, of the general reception of unitarianism by the members of unitarian parishes, with your oft repeated accusation. Do you mean, that unitarian preachers concealed the name of their sentiments, when delivering them to their hearers? If so, wherein lies the guilt of such a course? Is truth any less precious because stigmatized by an odious name? Is it a preacher's business to proclaim the party names which have deluged Christendom, and been a principal cause of dividing Christians? And if a parish have embraced true views of the gospel, do you suppose they will be so foolish as to renounce them, because they did not at first know the sectarian title by which they had been christened? If a man finds a guinea, and knows it to be pure gold, but knows not its name, will he cast it from him as worthless, when informed of the appellation by which it is called? If this be your meaning, please to inform us, if this is the estimate you put upon the understandings of your own hearers, and by them proceed to form your opinion of unitarian believers? Do you mean that unitarian ministers have sincerely endeavoured, according to the best of their judgment, to promote the religious knowledge and spiritual welfare of their hearers? And is not this their duty? Is it not commanded by Jesus and his Apostles? Have you any authority to dictate to other peachers how they must perform their ministerial services?

Now, Sir, I wish to know why this charge of concealment against unitarian ministers has been so often reiterated by orthodox writers. Has it not been done to frighten the more ignorant members of our societies, so that you could gain a few proselytes? Remember, Sir, that the orthodox are peculiarly obnoxious to this charge of concealment. One of your pupils made this confession to me after he had been in your seminary two years. "If the orthodox community only knew how very liberal many of us are in certain articles of theology, they would not hear us preach." How long is it, since a public charge was given to orthodox ministers, not to preach the doctrine of election in times of religious excitement? How long since your colleague advised your pupils not to bring forward the doctrine of election too often, on account of the prejudices existing against it in the community? How long since one of your students who had been lately ordained, observed that the orthodox did not preach sufficient terror? And when asked why he did not preach more, answered — 'Because my people will not bear it.' I have more facts on this subject than you may imagine. You must remember that there are men now in the unitarian denomination who were once initiated into all the secrets of the orthodox party; and unless you choose to conduct your controversies in a more Christan and honorable manner, a disclosure may hereafter be

made. The literal fact is this ; many of your preachers are much more liberal than their hearers imagine, while many others are much more rigid in their sentiments, and they feel obliged to trim their course of ministerial duty, in order to keep their societies united. But, even if this be not blamable (though I certainly wish to pursue no such practice myself) I do find fault, when you proceed to condemn day after day your unitarian brethren for doing precisely the same thing which is practised to a much greater extent in your own denomination. And how you can reconcile such a custom of denunciation, with free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism, I will not undertake to determine. Remember that unitarians have the same right, and as much reason, to accuse the orthodox of spreading their sentiments by concealment.

6. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Universalists. Sixthly.* Look at those passages, in which orthodox writers accuse unitarians of being universalists. One clause from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims" will answer my present purpose. "Leading *unitarians* in the United States, with possibly a few exceptions, *do believe* the doctrine of universal salvation, and are in every thing but the name *universalists.*" Now why have you so often brought this charge against unitarians? I firmly believe it has been done to injure their influence and disaffect their hearers. Your writers well know, that many among the universalists believe in no future punishment. They also know that this doctrine is peculiarly offensive to a considerable portion of the community. They are therefore willing to confound the two classes together, and to permit the unlearned to believe, that unitarians have embraced this obnoxious sentiment. I do not make this statement without satisfactory evidence.

And does your charge contain the truth? Is it a fact, that almost all the leading unitarians in our country believe in universal salvation? I think not; although I cannot imitate you, by saying that I am well acquainted with *all* against whom this charge is specially directed. But I will honestly and frankly state what I believe to be the exact truth on this question. On the subject of punishment, I think the unitarians may be divided into four distinct classes. They all believe that God will render unto every man according to his deeds, and that all who die impenitent and unreformed must suffer the natural consequences of their wicked characters. The first class then believe in the annihilation of the wicked, after a limited period of suffering. I say *class*, although I am unable to name but one individual of this belief in the whole denomination. A second class believe that those who die unregenerated, will eventually become holy, and consequently be saved from the torment of their sinfulness. I again say *class*, although I am unable to name but few individuals of this belief in the denomination. A third class cannot find sufficient evidence in the Bible to warrant a *belief* in endless torments, neither can they find sufficient evidence to

warrant a *belief* in universal restoration. They therefore leave the subject indefinite, as they believe the Scriptures have left it. How many or what proportion of the whole are embraced in this class, I have no means of determining. For on this as on all other subjects, every man in the denomination thinks for himself, and there is no human standard erected for making hypocrites. The last class believe in the everlasting punishment of the wicked; and I have reason to believe that it is very respectable both for numbers and character. If my statement is correct, you perceive how very unfounded is your oft repeated accusation. You see that the number who have a firm *belief* in universal salvation is comparatively small. If you mean to include all who fondly *hope* and wish, that it may be consistent with the justice and mercy of the common Father, to enable his children to love and serve him, so as to answer the design of their creation, I desire for the credit of humanity that the whole denomination may be included.

Now I could bring the charge of universalism with equal justice against your denomination. For I do know, that some members of orthodox churches privately entertain the belief of universal restoration. I do also believe, that orthodox preachers have done more, than all other causes combined, to make universalists. And I likewise undestand, that the whole orthodox party in Germany, whom you are ever willing to praise, have embraced the doctrine of universal salvation. I will give you a few sentences from the late publication of the orthodox Mr. Dwight, whose authority none of you will pretend to dispute. Here you have his own words. "The doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is almost universally rejected. I have seen but *one* person in Germany who believed it; and but *one* other whose mind was wavering on this subject." Remember, Sir, that these are the orthodox Christians whose praises some of your writers have sounded so long and so loudly. And what effect has this rejection produced on their Christian character? Let the same orthodox writer answer this question. Here you have his words. "I have *never seen any* Christians, who seemed to me to have a deeper sense of the odiousness of sin in the sight of God, or whose hearts beat with a more ardent gratitude for our Saviour, for the great redemption he has made for fallen man. I *know of no* examples of *humility greater* than those exhibited by some of these gentlemen, or more elevated views of the character of God than you discover in their conversation. So far as an opinion can be formed of them from their reputation and their conversation, we must *look in vain* for *brighter* examples of *piety* than they exhibit. They certainly manifest a *greater spirit of love* for those *who differ* from them, than is found in *most* of *our* sects; and *they feel very unwilling to shut the gates of heaven against all those who do not believe every article of their creed.* In *this charity and love,* the *Christians* of *most protestant* countries *would do well to imitate them.*"

A very important admission, and no very blind hint to his orthodox friends in this land of boasted freedom.

For my own part, I know not why the unitarians of America may not investigate the subject of future punishment as well as the orthodox of Germany. I know not how they are to reject evidence on this question, any more than on other theological inquiries. I know not how any man can believe a proposition without satisfactory proof, or contrary to convincing evidence. If a man cannot find sufficient testimony in the Scriptures to enable him to believe in the endless torments of the wicked, I know not why he should be held up to public reprobation for his honest convictions. If a belief in either doctrine indicates a corrupt heart, I see not but it must be the doctrine of endless misery. And I think the unitarians have more reason to accuse you of being actuated by corrupt motives in adhering to this belief, than you have to charge them with an evil heart of unbelief, because they hope and pray and labor for the salvation of all mankind, and do not find any evidence of an eternal decree to consign the larger portion of the human family to unutterable and never-ending woe. And remember, Sir, that unitarians have the same right, and as much reason, to bring this charge against the orthodox denomination. I will merely add, that it is my hearty prayer, that you and your aggrieved friends may meekly improve the kind hint of Mr. Dwight, and imitate the charity and love, of the *orthodox universalists* of Germany.

7. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Heretics. Seventhly.* Look at those passages, in which orthodox writers have denounced unitarians as heretics, and promoters of damnable heresies. Charges of this kind are so common, that it seems scarcely necessary to make even a quotation. I will however take a sentence from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims." "And here I would say, that as Christ crucified, or the *atonement* of Christ, is the foundation of all hope for sinners, *so those who deny this doctrine, the atonement*, differing or agreeing in whatever else they may, *are the persons* referred to by the apostle, when he speaks of DAMNABLE HERESIES." Now you well know that unitarians do not believe in the *Calvinistic* doctrine of the atonement, although they uniformly hold to the Scriptural doctrine of the atonement. But for you to accuse them of propagating damnable heresies, because they prefer the words and statements of inspired apostles and a divine Saviour to those of John Calvin, seems not a little domineering. And every one of you, who has studied theology to any purpose, must know that unitarians are no more scripturally entitled to the name of heretics than the orthodox are. I shall not therefore attempt to reason on this question, but simply quote one passage from the orthodox Dr. Campbell. "I shall conclude, with adding to the observations on the words *schism* and *heresy*, that how much soever of a schismatical or heretical spirit, in the apostolic sense of the terms, may have contributed to the formation

of the different sects into which the Christian world is at present divided; *no person who, in the spirit of candor and charity, adheres to that which, to the best of his judgment, is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is, in the* SCRIPTURAL *sense, either schismatic or heretic;* AND THAT HE, ON THE CONTRARY, WHATEVER SECT HE BELONG TO, IS MORE ENTITLED TO THESE ODIOUS APPELLATIONS, WHO IS MOST APT TO THROW THE IMPUTATION UPON OTHERS."

8. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Enemies to Jesus Christ. Eighthly.* Look at those passages, in which orthodox writers charge unitarians with being enemies to Jesus Christ, and all that is valuable in religion. One quotation from the Farewell Discourse of the late Dr. Mason will be sufficient. "Above all things it is devoutly to be hoped, that you will never invite to the care of your souls, a man who cares nothing about them. I mean, more particularly, for I would not be misunderstood, a man who belongs to that *rank of traitors* who miscall themselves *rational Christians.* Against these men I have *ever* warned you, AS THE ENEMIES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, *and all that is valuable in his religion and peculiar in his salvation.*" To reason on this subject would be idle. Remember that unitarians have the same right and equal reason to accuse the orthodox denomination of being enemies to Jesus and his religion.

9. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Deists in Disguise. Ninthly.* Look at those passages, in which orthodox writers have accused unitarians of being deists in disguise. My first extract shall be from Dr. Miller. "You are prepared, I hope, to decide, promptly and without wavering, that they, unitarians, are by no means to be considered as Christians, in any Scriptural sense of the word; that their preaching is to be avoided as blasphemy; their publications to be abhorred as pestiferous; their ordinances to be held unworthy of regard as Christian institutions; and *their persons to be in all respects treated as decent and sober* DEISTS IN DISGUISE." The Reverend Doctor must have a very contemptuous opinion of the orthodox denomination, and very little confidence in orthodox sentiments, if he is obliged to adopt such strong language to frighten his readers from hearing unitarian preaching, or reading unitarian books, or attending on unitarian ordinances.

My next extract shall be from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims," said to have been written by yourself. "The question is here soon to be, Whether the Bible is indeed an inspired book, and its decisions final and authoritative in the Christian church. The time has been, when a suggestion of this nature would have brought down a storm of obloquy upon the man, who dared to venture on making it. The time now is, when some of the younger, bolder, more thorough-going, more open-hearted young men, and a few of the older ones, do not hesitate, when among the INITIATED, to answer the question above in the negative; nor do some

of them hesitate even to preach what implies a negative; although they are somewhat guarded in their assertions, on account of the yet remaining *prejudices*, as they term them, of their hearers, or at least a portion of their hearers. These open-hearted men, whose sincerity we do not feel at all disposed to question, and whom we, on every account, respect far more than we can those who are not bold and honest enough to make an open profession of their belief, only need a little more of a common centre around which they may rally, some able, and learned, and fearless defender of their cause, to come out with an entirely open face, and avow substantially the naturalism which Dr. Wegscheider now teaches at Halle-Wittenberg." Now this passage contains several most weighty charges against unitarians. First, some young and a few old unitarians declare privately, that the Bible is *not* an inspired book, and that its decisions are *not* final and authoritative in the Christian church. Secondly, that these men only need some able leaders, and they will openly declare themselves on deistical ground. Thirdly, that another class are not deserving your respect, because they are not bold and honest enough to make an open profession of their belief. And from these premises, this conclusion naturally follows, that most of the unitarians are hypocrites; for they are now really deists, but disguise their belief, and call themselves Christians. Of all the charges against unitarians, I know of none more slanderous than this. After making this statement, I should not suppose you would ever complain of the severity of unitarian denunciations. For you here aim a death-blow at their very sincerity and honesty; you would hold them up before the world as hypocrites. I can never condescend to reason with a man who denies the very integrity of my heart on the question in debate. I will only say, that a more false and injurious statement was never published.

10. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Infidels. Tenthly.* Look at those passages. in which orthodox writers have accused unitarians of being infidels. A few sentences from "The Spirit of the Pilgrims" will answer my purpose. "Who can hesitate where to class those leading, standard unitarians, whose writings have been quoted! Is it an abuse of language to call such witers infidels? The infidelity of leading unitarians in this region is not, with them, mere philosophical speculation. It has been poured out upon this community, in conversation, in the lecture-room, from the pulpit, and the press, till the whole moral atmosphere is in a degree infected. It has rolled over this portion of our fair land like a destroying deluge, and unless the Lord lift up a standard against it, where shall its proud waves be stayed? It certainly is high time that things were called by their right names; and that the public were loudly and solemnly warned of the dangers that surround them." I have no wish to reason on this question. I merely desire to ask a few questions. Does an individual leader in your

party *believe* the truth of these charges? Do *you* believe, that unitarians have given up their faith in the divine and miraculous origin of the Christian religion? No. Why then do you wish to make the ignorant believe such a falsehood? To injure the character and usefulness of unitarians. And, Sir, where has infidelity prevailed to the greatest extent? In places were unitarianism or Calvinism has most prevailed? In the regions of Calvinism. And who have written the most unanswerable defences of revelation? Unitarians. And who is to check the progress of infidelity in our land? The unitarian. He can show that the Gospel does not teach Calvinism. And how can you reconcile such charges, to say nothing of truth, with the principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism? Remember that unitarians have the same right and as much reason to accuse the orthodox of infidelity.

11. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians are Emissaries of Satan, Devils, and worse than the Devil. Eleventhly.* Look at those passages, in which orthodox writers have accused unitarians of being emissaries of Satan, devils, and worse than the Devil. My first extract shall be from a Sermon by the President of Nashville College. These are his words. "Behold the progress of *heresy* and *infidelity* under the disguise of *rational christianity*. See the artifice of the GREAT DESTROYER in these latter days. HE has *commissioned* his *emissaries* to assume the garb and the functions of the *minister of the gospel*, that they may more effectually sap the foundation of the whole Christian edifice. He has enlisted talents, and learning, and indefatigable enterprise in this work of desolation. *Modern unitarianism*, which is every where insinuating itself into the hearts of men, naturally predisposed to its reception, because it is exactly suited to the natural character of man, is *more to be dreaded than any species of infidelity ever yet avowed.*" What, more than Atheism? Let that pass. Here you perceive that unitarian ministers are called emissaries of Satan by a former Professor at Princeton. What would you say, if I should inform you that this said President had already become a liberal Christian himself?

My next quotation shall be from the Letters of Canonicus, as giving a fair specimen of the views of your Seminary. He first attempts to prove that unitarians do not believe in the personal existence of an almost omnipotent Devil, and then draws the following inference. "*Satan has few more successful servants* than those professed teachers of Christianity, who either openly deny his existence, or by never asserting it, let it slip out of the minds of their hearers. The *amiable* and *estimable* qualities, the *varied learning* and *beneficent dispositions of such teachers*, may make them *revered* and *loved* and *honored* in ANY community. It is, indeed, a most ungrateful task to bring forward, either directly or by implication, such a charge against a *highly respectable* portion of the community." The plain meaning of the whole

then is this. Unitarians are the most successful servants of Satan. Why? Because some of them, either do not believe in the personal existence of an almost omnipotent Devil, or do not weekly hold him up before their hearers. But there are also other points in these assertions, which I wish you to explain. If unitarians are the most successful servants of Satan, I cannot understand how they are so worthy to be *revered* and *loved* and *honored* in ANY community, especially in an orthodox community. For one of your preachers lately informed his hearers, that our Saviour's command to love our enemies did not extend to the Devil; and I see no reason why it should extend to his most successful servants. And if unitarians are the most successful servants of Satan, I cannot conceive how they can constitute a *most respectable* portion of the community. For I have always been accustomed to consider the most successful servants of Christ the most respectable portion of society; and, if I mistake not, our Saviour so regarded them. But if all this is the necessary inference from orthodox reasoning, do pray observe a rigid consistency.

My last passage shall be from Dr. Mason's Farewell Discourse in New York. "I know that this congregation is considered by them [unitarians], as the very focus of what they term bigotry; and I do rejoice that thus far I and you have been counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Long may it continue so! Long may it be thought a hopeless case *to attempt to bring you over to the fellowship of* DEVILS. Though I would not *slander* the DEVIL; *he promotes his work as the destroyer, not by tempting men to his belief, but by persuading them to embrace what he does not believe — what is too coarse and abominable for hell itself.*" This is plain language. Unitarianism is too coarse and abominable for hell itself. Unitarians are devils; and worse than the Devil himself; for it would be slandering the Devil to charge him with doing what is daily done by unitarians. Very well. I shall not argue the question, whether unitarians are possessed by the devil or not. But I must have some evidence, besides mere assertion, before I can yield the point in dispute. I would merely add, Remember that unitarians have the same right and equal reason to bring these charges against the orthodox denomination.

12. *The Orthodox assert that Unitarians cannot be saved, but must go to Hell. Twelfthly.* Look at those numerous passages, in which orthodox ministers have asserted that unitarians cannot be saved, but must be eternally damned. Indeed this practice has become so common as to shock all respectable people of other denominations. In proof of this assertion, I will quote merely one passage from the last American Quarterly Review. These are the words. "We do not belong to the sect of unitarians, and feel no concern for the extension of their principles, but we have been shocked by the open and coarse manner in which their claims to Christianity have been denied; and the fury by which the

members of that church, many of whom we know to be pious, learned, and excellent men, *have been in a summary way, doomed to everlasting and hopeless misery, even from the altars of the God of* MERCY." Having given you the passage from this able and catholic Journal, I will proceed with my extracts from orthodox ministers. The first shall be from Dr. Beecher's Sermon at Portland. "Reflect, I beseech you, on the argument; and remember, that in proportion to the certainty of its result, *is the certainty of your destruction — your everlasting destruction, if you reject the doctrine of the atonement*, and of justification by faith. Let parents think of this, who *put in jeopardy*, not their *own souls* only, but the *souls* of their confiding offspring. Let professed ministers of Christ, who reject the divinity of Christ, and neglect to preach, or preach against, the doctrines of atonement and justification by faith; — *let such ministers* reflect, and tremble at the possibility, the *probability*, the CERTAINTY, that *they will destroy both their own souls and the souls of them that hear them.*" This is sufficiently explicit. Unitarians who reject Dr. Beecher's views of the atonement and justification by faith, will *certainly* be damned.

My next passage shall be from an extemporaneous discourse, delivered by the Rev. Mr. Green of Boston, at an evening lecture in Salem, and recorded at the time by one of the most distinguished gentlemen of that place. These are the very sentiments advanced. "Nine churches (we do not mention it with a spirit of boasting) have been recently established in the vicinity of Boston, upon ground where another gospel has been preached, we do verily believe it another gospel, WHICH NEVER BROUGHT A SOUL TO JESUS CHRIST AND TO HEAVEN, AND NEVER WILL, *by men whom we can love and do love, whom we can pray for and do pray for, whom we can weep over and do weep over.*" Now several circumstances render these assertions peculiarly unchristian and injurious. *First*, they were uttered with great solemnity to an audience composed principally of females; and not of that class of females who would be most likely to suspect the infallibility of their origin. *Secondly*, their spiritual pride and self-righteousness would be very liable to be increased, by such a call upon them to pray and weep over the fatal errors of Christians as good or better than themselves. *Thirdly*, the remarks allude particularly to such men as Dr. Tuckerman, the late Dr. Foster, Dr. Ripley, and other distinguished worthies. And, finally, neither the preacher nor his hearers had arrived at such Christian perfection, as to warrant them in neglecting their own failings, and in spending their time in weeping and praying for their neighbours. Did they remember the prayer of the Pharisee?

My third quotation shall be from your Letter on Religious Liberty. These are your words. "*We do from the heart believe, that the eternal salvation of our fellow-beings is connected with a hearty assent to the fundamental principles which we avow.*" Now these fundamental principles

which you avow are contained in your human creed. You know that no unitarian can give his hearty assent to those principles. You do therefore believe, that their eternal salvation is forfeited. In other words, you heartily believe unitarians must be eternally damned because they will not profess their hearty belief in the articles of your human creed. Is not this the true meaning of your declaration?

My last extracts hall be from the Farewell Discourse of Dr. Mason. In order to make the whole paragraph intelligible, I must take the sentences already quoted in the connexion. "Long may it be thought a hopeless case to attempt to bring you over to the fellowship of devils. Though I would not slander the Devil; he promotes his work as the destroyer, not by tempting men to his belief, but by persuading them to embrace what he does not believe — *what is too coarse and abominable for hell itself;* AND WHAT THE PHILOSOPHICAL CHRISTIANS SHALL FIND TO BE SO WHEN THEY GET TO THEIR OWN PLACE. The pretences of these men to kindness, and candor, and love, are all hollow. They mean to make proselytes of you, and two-fold more the children of hell than themselves. O keep at a distance from them. Furthest from them, and their charity is best. *Come not near their ice,* NEVER TO BE MELTED BUT IN THAT FIRE WHICH SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED!" This Reverend Doctor consigns us to endless torments with the most perfect coolness. I am sure no one can envy such a man his disposition or character.

Now, Sir, I wish to know what you mean by such declarations. Do you really believe that unitarians are to be consigned to endless misery? Do you heartily believe that such men as Buckminster, and Thacher, and Prentiss, and Abbot, and a host of similar characters are now suffering excruciating torments in hell; and that they are there to suffer to all eternity! I demand an explicit and public answer to this question. And what will it be? Will you dare openly to avow such a belief? I think not. For in the first place, you must know, that such an avowal would strike a death blow at Christianity; because the Saviour promised heavenly felicity to those who sincerely obeyed his commands; and if these men did not render holy obedience, will you pretend that any of your denomination ever have? In the second place, you must know, that such an avowal would strike a fatal blow at the pillars of Protestantism; because these declare that the Scriptures are the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice, and that every person may study and understand them for himself; and if these men did not make the Bible the only rule of faith and practice, will you pretend that any of your denomination ever have? In the third place, you must know that such an avowal would arouse the indignation of the majority of the orthodox denomination; because they firmly believe that these and similar unitarians were good Christians, and that all good Christians of every sect will be saved. And in the fourth place, you must know, that such an avowal would awaken the scorn and contempt of all liberal-

minded men everywhere; because if you pretend to believe that such men are to be eternally damned for not believing every article of your creed, you will manifest almost unparalleled weakness and bigotry. And if you dare not openly avow your belief in the damnation of these men, why do you make such declarations concerning unitarians? Do you make them to frighten the young, and weak, and ignorant, so that they may not become acquainted with unitarian sentiments? If so, how do you reconcile such a measure with the principles of free inquiry, religious liberty, and congregationalism? Remember that unitarians have the same reason, and as much right, to sentence the whole orthodox denomination to endless torments.

I have no room for more quotations. What then must be our conclusions? Do not the extracts I have made from orthodox writers fully prove, that you have denied unitarians almost every Christian right, and called them by almost every unchristian name? And do they not also fully prove that your denunciations are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism? I must conclude that both propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

VI. Miscellaneous Facts.

In the *sixth* place, I invite your attention to some miscellaneous facts, which could not well be introduced into the preceding divisions. I think the statements which I shall make under this head will prove the two following propositions. *First*, that many of the measures of the leaders of the orthodox party are oppressive and unchristian. And, *secondly*, that these measures are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. My limits will permit me to notice but six different classes of facts under this general division, although I intended to notice some twenty or thirty.

1. *Education Society. First.* Look at some of the measures of the American Education Society. *Three* circumstances strike me as peculiarly oppressive. One is this. The Society is *truly* exclusive in its reception of beneficiaries. Although a considerable amount of your funds has been obtained from unitarians, with the express understanding that indigent students of their own sentiments should be assisted, yet your board of directors will not grant assistance to a person of known unitarian belief. You indeed proclaim to the world, that young men of hopeful piety, from all denominations, may be aided in preparing for the gospel ministry; and that you require no confession of faith from any beneficiary. This declaration is true in one sense, and in another is false. Your conscience is saved, and the public deceived, by the following artifice. Unitarians are Congregationalists; you assist individuals of this denomination who have embraced orthodox sentiments; you therefore feel justified in affirming that you aid Congregationalists. And further, you assist none but young men of hopeful piety; the candidate must bring testimonials to this effect from proper authority;

none but orthodox recommendations answer this description ; and no orthodox man will consider a person of known unitarian views as hopefully pious. You therefore feel justified in declaring, that such are refused assistance, not because they are unitarians, but because they give no proper evidence of hopeful piety. On this ground, all persons of known unitarian sentiments are denied the aid of the Education Society. And is not this oppressive, since a portion of your funds was received from unitarian benevolence ?

The next circumstance, to which I alluded, is this. The Society is truly exclusive in its dismission of beneficiaries. A strict watch is maintained over their religious opinions. If one is discovered to be verging towards liberal views, he is warned, threatened, coaxed, and almost bribed. But if he should prove sufficiently independent to withstand such influence, and should pursue his inquiries until he arrive on the stable foundation of unitarianism, he is forthwith dismissed from the list of beneficiaries, although he still makes the Bible the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice, and continues to exhibit a Christian character. The board of directors assign no reason for their conduct; and when the real cause of such treatment is demanded at their hand, they coolly inform him, that he is not so pious as formerly. And if this be not satisfactory, and he still demands a more explicit reason, he is led to understand, that a unitarian belief is inconsistent with evangelical piety. To substantiate all that I have here stated, facts can be produced whenever the proper period arrives. I have omitted giving particular instances, on account of the individuals concerned, having no desire to bring their names before the public unnecessarily. Such is the course pursued by the Education Society to make the community believe they are liberal in their reception and dismission of beneficiaries, when the most rigid system of exclusion is practised.

The last circumstance, to which I alluded, is this. The Society adopt a singular series of measures to prevent their beneficiaries from embracing unitarianism. To some of the more important I will briefly advert. If the beneficiary wishes to receive his collegiate education at Cambridge, every possible exertion is made to frighten him from such a proceeding. The labors of the general secretary proved successful in preventing several young men from entering Harvard University at the last commencement. If the beneficiary visit freely in unitarian families while teaching a winter school, he is called to account for his conduct. I boarded with one, who was complained of by an orthodox clergyman for visiting in light and trifling company, simply because he attended a weekly reading party in an unitarian parish. The beneficiary is occasionally presented with books of a truly orthodox stamp and an allowance of some hundreds of tracts is put into his hands for gratuitous distribution. In this way, his or-

thodox impressions are confirmed; and his zeal in orthodox measures kept glowing and burning. The beneficiary receives an annual visit from an appointed agent, who converses with him freely on his religious opinions, and worms out his real sentiments on all controverted questions of theology. He then prays with him, and especially for him; and informs the Almighty of the dangers to which he is exposed, and what means are necessary to preserve him in the paths of orthodoxy. All those beneficiaries, who reside at the same literary institution, are obliged to assemble together once a month, according to the laws of a printed constitution. They must make one of their number the secretary of the body, who is to keep an account of all absences from the monthly meetings, note all aberrations in thought, word, and deed, and transmit a faithful history of the same to the general secretary. His answer will then be read for the special benefit of all concerned. The constitution further requires, that four prayers be made on each evening of meeting, and specifies the subjects. One is to be especially for their secretary, that he may be faithful in recording their errors and failings; and also for the whole Education Society. Another is to be made for the cause of orthodoxy in the institution in which they are stationed. A third is for the success of orthodox missions. And a fourth for the conversion of the world to orthodoxy. If this is not binding down the young men to the cause of a party, I know not how it can be done. Every beneficiary must give his note to repay all he receives after he shall have been settled in the ministry three or four years. How those who are ordained over your feeble churches are to comply with this condition is more than I can understand. Every thing connected with the Society is directly calculated to keep the minds of the beneficiaries on one grand concern; the grand concern of orthodoxy. I think this brief statement of facts is sufficient to convince liberal-minded men, of all parties, that your Society do not a little to offer a bounty on orthodoxy; not a little that is enslaving to the minds of the young men you aid; and not a little that is subversive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism.

2. *Praying.* *Secondly.* Look at certain orthodox prayers. I will mention *four* classes which appear to me to be truly unchristian. And, *first*, take those instances in which orthodox believers undertake to judge the hearts of unitarian preachers, and proclaim their uncharitable judgments to the world, in their solemn addresses to the Deity. I allude to those prayers of frequent recurrence in which orthodox ministers earnestly pray for the *conversion* of unitarian pastors. Not to deal in generals, I will take one example from the multitude of cases within my knowledge. When I was residing in Billerica, a few years since, one of the students of your seminary held a meeting at the house of a certain widow lady. Almost the whole of his prayer

on the occasion was for the late venerable Dr. Cumings, then senior pastor of the church in that town. He became exceedingly earnest, and even agonizing. The substance of his petition was this; that this aged minister might *begin* the great work of salvation before called to render up his solemn account; that he might be converted, regenerated, born again, and not suffered to leave the world with his unrepented sins on his soul.

Now, Sir, will you not pronounce such prayers unchristian? Did he not judge the heart of his elder brother?—pronounce it wicked and unregenerate? And for what cause? Simply because the worthy servant of Christ did not believe the articles of his human creed. For no pretence was ever made, that his Christian temper and conduct were peculiarly defective. Just review the circumstances. Here is a minister of the gospel. He once believed the trinitarian creed. He searched the Scriptures prayerfully, and found no support for his peculiar opinions. Like a true disciple, he sacrificed his erroneous sentiments on the altar of divine truth. He manifested the spirit of his Master to an uncommon degree, during a ministry of nearly sixty years. When the infirmities of age had palsied his powers, a young man of very little theological knowledge, and no uncommon excellencies of character, comes among his devoted people. In solemn prayer he assures them that their revered friend and pastor has never been converted; that he has yet to begin the great work of life; that he has been leading them in the ways of error and perdition; and that he must go down to everlasting woe unless the Lord regenerate his soul most speedily.

Do bring this case home to your own conscience. Suppose a bold and confident young man, who has just begun the study of theology, should be sent from Cambridge into your neighbourhood. Suppose he should, by any means, collect a few of your pupils and friends to hear him hold forth. Suppose he should make most of his prayer relate to yourself; and earnestly beseech the Almighty to *convert* your soul, and enable you to *begin* the work of salvation before called to render up your solemn account. You will admit that he would have as much right, and as Scriptural reasons, for saying all this in relation to you, as your pupil had for saying it in respect to Dr. Cumings. For you certainly will not pretend that you give better evidence in your temper and conduct of being born again, the only Scriptural evidence on this question, than the Doctor had exhibited for more than half a century. Should such a case occur, would you not say that the young man had travelled out of his province, and taken too much on himself? Would you not aver, that he had violated a plain command of Jesus in pronouncing you unconverted?—that he was endeavouring to injure your usefulness and character by uttering opinions in his prayers which he would hardly presume to make in his discourses?—that he was at-

tempting to alienate from you the confidence and affection of your friends and supporters? — and that such a practice was inconsistent with free inquiry and religious liberty? Why then should not the same things be said of your theological students?

And, *secondly*, take those instances which strike at the foundation of domestic happiness. I allude to those examples in which orthodox wives have been encouraged to meet together to pray for the conversion of their unitarian husbands, and confer on the subject, and devise new means of influence. Now, Sir, do you really believe that such a proceeding can be productive, on any principle, of sufficient good to compensate for the domestic misunderstandings and distrust it must engender? Is it not consistent with your consciences or with orthodoxy to spare the peace and sanctity of our homes? On this topic, however, I forbear to dwell, though I have evidence in my possession to convince any candid person that the public are as yet but half apprized of the extent of the evil.

Look then, *thirdly*, at those instances in which whole bodies of men are prayerfully slandered. I allude to the extensive combination among the orthodox to pray for the conversion of Harvard University. This union has been formed some time, but has lately been awakened to more fervent devotions by the charitable exertions of an agent of your party. He has recently visited various and distant parts of this commonwealth, and solemnly assured many congregations, that this ancient college had become a poisoned fountain; that it would be tempting God, to send their sons to this seat of learning; that unless funds are raised to erect a church, an orthodox church, in the very vicinity of this synagogue of Satan, we are all dead men and dead women. After getting the one thing needful, he exhorts them to be very fervent in their prayers for the conversion of Harvard University. And many of the orthodox, believing these stories, unite very sincerely one hour a week to pray for some special aid from Heaven to make this college orthodox in its creed.

Now, Sir, will you not pronounce this an unchristian and illiberal measure? Just bring the practice home to your own feelings. Suppose the unitarians should form a combination to pray an hour a week for the conversion of your theological seminary. Suppose they should commission some fiery zealot to visit the various parts of the commonwealth for this object. Suppose he should declare, that you had become dissatisfied with the Scriptures, and had set up a human standard of religious truth; that you were training up young men to disturb the harmony of our families, neighbourhoods, and societies; and that you allowed no freedom of opinion and thought to your pupils. Suppose he should affirm, that the instructers had lately been so divided among themselves as to lead the students to think they were possessed of very little religion; and that the students adhered so tenaciously to the

ejected professor, as to cause the other heads of the faculty to fear they were destitute of piety. Suppose he should aver, that unless a mass of money was obtained to erect a unitarian church on Institution Hill, we are all dead men and dead women. You will allow that he would have as much foundation in truth for such assertions, as your commissioned beggar had for most of his declarations. And suppose such exertions should be successful in organizing a union to pray for the conversion of your seminary to unitarianism. Would you not pronounce such a measure truly unchristian, illiberal, and uncharitable? And is the same conduct any less unchristian when perpetrated by orthodox leaders? when a union is formed for prayerfully slandering Harvard University?

And, *fourthly*, look at those instances in which unitarians are forced to give an outward assent to the trinitarian belief. I allude to those unscriptural doxologies which are sung in orthodox churches at the close of religious exercises. The congregation are expected to arise and stand during this solemn act of worship; and to have the following or similar sentiments pass through their minds:

"To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Be honor, praise, and glory given,
By all on earth and all in heaven."

Now, Sir, is not this an unchristian practice? For there are but very few orthodox societies in this commonwealth which do not contain a considerable number of unitarians. And should they dare to assert their rights, and either leave the church or remain sitting during this act of devotion, the indignation of the minister and his friends would be heaped on their heads. I indeed know that some have been sufficiently independent to withstand this imposition. In one place, a distinguished judge arose and informed the preacher that no such measures would be tolerated in that congregation. In another society, numbers would not arise while the human creed was uttered by the voice of music. In several instances, the singers have refused thus to profess what they disbelieved. I hope such worthy examples may be generally imitated. For this is a modern invention in our congregational churches. I believe such doxologies were never sung in Andover until after the establishment of your theological seminary. I think they were not introduced into many of the orthodox societies in your county until after that period. And a more illiberal practice cannot well be imagined. For the design evidently is to impress an article of orthodox belief on the minds of the young, before they are able to investigate the subject for themselves; and also to beat this error into the heads of the adult by dint of frequent repetition. The pious Watts, who wrote so many of these contradictory lines, would have expunged them all from his hymn-

book before he died, had he not disposed of the copy right of the work. And who will dare affirm that there is any Scriptural authority for such a usage? Just reverse the case. Suppose a doxology could be framed which would express the Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary. Suppose a part of their congregations was composed of Protestants. Suppose they were compelled, sabbath after sabbath, to rise and stand while this act of unscriptural worship was performed. Would you not call such a practice unchristian and illiberal? I have room for no more facts on this subject. Very many examples of a more striking and unchristian character must be omitted. I think these are sufficient to convince candid minds that certain orthodox prayers are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

3. *Withholding Patronage. Thirdly.* Look at some of the orthodox measures for depriving unitarians of the means of subsistence. Orthodox ministers have urged their people to vote for none but orthodox Christians for public offices. They have advised parents to take their children from well conducted schools, because their instructers attended unitarian meetings. Orthodox laymen have withdrawn their patronage from mechanics, merchants, physicians, and lawyers, because they embraced unitarian sentiments. So many instances of this kind now occur to my mind, that I know not where to begin the selection. I will however take a case which involves many principles as well as individuals. The circumstances are briefly these. A high school was established in Geneseo, New York. Three young men, graduates of Harvard University, entered into written engagements to take charge of the institution. The simple circumstance of their receiving degrees at Cambridge was sufficient to arouse the enmity of orthodox leaders. Accordingly the minister of the place drew up the following circular, and endeavoured to obtain the names of the influential inhabitants of the county.

"A memorial of sundry inhabitants of the County of Livingston addressed to the stockholders of the Livingston County High School. — We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the County of Livingston, having been informed that the board of directors of the Livingston County High School have employed as instructers in said school, *three* young men from Harvard University, beg leave respectfully to represent, that, coming as they do from a college which has long been known to the Christian community as the fountain of the most destructive heresy, with professions of neutrality in relation to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, which facts are accompanied with a train of circumstances which renders it extremely probable, if not morally certain, that they are deeply imbued with, and highly in favor of unitarian sentiments, we cannot, consistently with our duty to God, to the community in which we live, and to the youth of our country, either directly or indirectly support or encourage the school, while under their auspices; as

we conscientiously believe in so doing, we should be instrumental in disseminating principles which strike directly at the root of the faith, as held by *all the Christian* denominations of this country."

You perceive that the writer speaks of a "train of circumstances." To what does he allude? He wrote a letter to the Rev. Dr. Wisner of Boston for information on this subject; and the reverend gentleman returned a very full answer. I have not a copy of the letter by me; but if I should meet the author I should ask him the following questions. Did you not intimate that unitarians in this region were designing to introduce unitarianism into the western part of New York? — that these young men were doubtless the tools of the leaders? — that it was the duty of the orthodox to oppose their coming? — and that if they could not effect this object in any other way, they had better open an opposition school? An affirmative answer to these inquiries will explain the train of circumstances. And what was the object to be effected by this memorial? It was to awaken the zeal of the stockholders so that they might assemble and choose a new board of directors, and thus break the written engagement of the old board. But it was generally known in that region, that one of the three young men was orthodox in his opinions; and but few names could be obtained. A new memorial was therefore circulated with the word *two* inserted in the place of *three*; and to this a large number of signatures was attached. But instead of presenting *that* to the stockholders, they took the names and placed them on the one I have copied. It seems they could not consistently with their duty to God have young men from Cambridge, but they could practise a gross deception in perfect consistency with this duty. I will not add one word to this plain statement of facts; for this alone is sufficient to awaken the indignation of all honorable minds. I will merely say, that I hope the time will speedily arrive, when these persons can exhibit an example of old fashioned honesty, consistently with their duty to God.

4. *Convention of Congregational Ministers. Fourthly.* Look to some of the proceedings of orthodox leaders in the convention of ministers. A few words of explanation seem necessary to render my statements intelligible to the community. The churches of this commonwealth were originally of the congregational order. Their pastors were early accustomed to assemble at Boston in Election week, and to consult as equals and brethren on the interests of religion. They now have considerable funds at their disposal, which were obtained in the following manner. A donation was made by one Judah Monis, a converted Jew; large sums were afterwards received from benevolent individuals; and there is an annual contribution immediately after the convention sermon. The proceeds of these funds were first bestowed on indigent clergymen; afterwards on their widows and children; but are now confined to the indigent widows of congregational ministers.

By looking over the list of donors, you will perceive that no small amount of the property of the convention was given by unitarian or liberal Christians.

The convention seldom, if ever, assumed any ecclesiastical authority or jurisdiction; although orthodox leaders occasionally attempted such measures. The elder clergy will doubtless recollect the speech of the Rev. Mr. Allen of Pittsfield, which openly exposed the iniquity of Drs. Morse and Lyman. In 1804 it was proposed to convert the convention into a General Association, and confer upon it the powers usually assumed and exercised by that body. But public opinion prevented the success of this attempt, although the committee reported in favor of such a measure. The most daring attempt was commenced in 1821, and frustrated in 1823. In 1821 an application was made to the convention, by three ministers, calling themselves the Old Colony Association, for an answer to the following question: "What is a congregational church, with which we may have fellowship, as such?" The request was scarcely noticed. The next year the North Worcester Association proposed the following question: "What is a *Christian* church, with which we *ought* to hold communion, as such?" The whole business had been planned and concluded on with intended secrecy in Park Street vestry. The committee which had been previously selected was chosen, consisting of twelve orthodox members and one unitarian, and authorized to report at the next annual meeting. Exertion was made to have the report printed and circulated during the year, but was frustrated. Your friend, Dr. Woods, was chairman of this committee; but he did not find all the other members so tractable as he wished. He wrote a dictatorial letter to the Rev. Mr. Stearns, of Bedford; and received in answer a few homely but wholesome truths. However, the report was finished, and at the meeting in 1823, was read to the convention. A motion was made by yourself to have it printed. But you mistook your men. No notice was taken of your desire; but the following vote quickly passed: "*That the convention will take* NO FURTHER *order on the subject.*" And what was the substance of this famous report. Simply this. *That a Christian church, with which we ought to hold communion, must subscribe the orthodox creed.*

Now, Sir, what was the design of your leaders in this most daring attempt? What objects did you expect to accomplish? *Five.* First, you wished to learn what portion of the orthodox ministers were prepared to take up arms against the sacred rights of unitarians? Secondly, you wished to ascertain what portion were ready to adopt a human creed, instead of the Bible, as their standard of religious truth. Thirdly, you wished to drive the liberal clergy from the convention, either by adopting a doctrinal test, or by a direct vote of exclusion. Fourthly, you wished to know how far public sentiment would support you in withdrawing ministerial intercourse from unitarians. And

fifthly, and especially, you wished to obtain complete possession of the *funds* of the convention. As you will probably admit the correctness of my four first assertions, no reasons need be given in support of their truth. But as the fifth implies a very serious charge, you may wish for proof. The evidence, which was perfectly satisfactory to my own mind, is this. At that time I was pursuing theological studies with an orthodox clergyman, and from various sources obtained not a few of the secrets of your denomination. That very week I was in company with a member of your Seminary, one of your favorite pupils. I asked him what object was to be gained by the adoption of Dr. Woods's report, the character of which we then knew. His answer was simply this: *To exclude the unitarians, and obtain possession of the funds.* The answer made a deep impression on my mind, and aided essentially in opening my eyes to the policy of the orthodox leaders. I soon repeated the statement to others, and continued to do the same thing whenever occasion has since required. I do not say that your pupil had any authority to make this assertion; but I do say, that I then believed he uttered the literal truth; and that this evidence has ever been perfectly satisfactory to my mind.

And by what means was this bold and unprincipled measure frustrated? The community were awake to the question. On the day for reading the report, the court-house was early filled to overflowing by distinguished laymen from all parts of the Commonwealth. Their appearance had considerable effect in intimidating your leaders. But much had previously been done by ministers of orthodox sentiments. Perhaps more credit is due to the late Dr. Parish, than to any other individual. He openly asserted that certain orthodox ministers wished to introduce religious tyranny, and that the Professors at Andover were among the foremost of this number. And to prevent the success of your attempt, he sent nearly a hundred letters to clergymen in all parts of the State, urging their attendance at the convention, and their opposition to your designed intolerant measure. In this way, all the secret consultations, and artful manœuvring, and laborious exertions, of the leaders of your party were overruled, and by producing a strong reaction only served to injure the cause they were intended to promote. I need not add one word to impress upon the public mind the illiberal character of such an undertaking.

5. *Andover Theological Seminary. Fifthly.* Many of the proceedings in your Institution appear to me illiberal and unchristian. Faithful records of several exclusive measures are now in unitarian hands. I am prevented from making use of the existing documents on account of one or two unavoidable circumstances. They will doubtless be published in due season. I shall not therefore be so definite and full under this head as I expected. I will merely ask you five questions. And, *first*, have you not declared, that you care not what opinions the young

men entertain when they enter your Seminary; but that you shall exert all your influence to make them embrace orthodox sentiments; and that if you are not successful in this particular, you shall withhold from them your approbation when they leave your institution? I know you are bound to this course by your solemn obligations. But is such a proceeding consistent with free inquiry and religious liberty? Ought not your influence to be exerted for the discovery of truth; and to preserve the minds of your pupils from prejudice? Ought they not to have both sides of every question candidly stated, and be left to decide for themselves on which the argument preponderates? Ought they not to be rewarded for an honest and fearless examination of the Scriptures, and a rigid adherence to what appears to be the real meaning of the sacred writers, rather than punished for departing from the human standard of orthodoxy? How very different the measures adopted by you and by unitarian Professors. Look simply at the introductory remarks of Dr. Taylor's Theological Lectures. Here they are. "I do solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and before whose judgment-seat you must, in no long time, appear; that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to evidence as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reason; carefully guarding against the sallies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill grounded conjecture. That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle or sentiment by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be justified by proper evidence from revelation, or reason of things. That if, at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be dubious or false, you either suspect or totally reject, such principle or sentiment. That you keep your mind always open to evidence; that you labor to banish from your breast all prejudice, prepossession, and party zeal; that you study to live in peace and love with all your fellow Christians; and that you steadily assert for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable right of judgment and conscience." This divine was not afraid to trust either himself or his pupils with the use of their reason or the study of their Bible. But how very different must be your charge to your students. In substance and reality it can amount to nothing more than this. 'Unless you believe all the articles of the human standard which I have sworn to defend, I will not give you my approbation when you leave my Seminary. And I do from the heart believe, that your eternal salvation is connected with a hearty assent to the fundamental principles which I avow.'

And, *secondly*, are you not in the common practice of speaking against unitarians before your pupils? Do you not often attempt to ridicule

and sneer at their opinions, criticisms, and arguments? Do you not aim to make them appear contemptible as scholars, critics, and Christians? Do you not strive to prevent your students from becoming acquainted with their writings, or characters, or persons? Do you not labor to excite and increase their enmity to the denomination? Have you not carried this measure to such excess, as to cause one of your devoted students to declare, that you were "rea ly too bad." I know you are bound to this course by your solemn oath; for this is one of the easiest ways in which you can oppose the unitarian heresy. But how different from the dignified and Christian conduct of the theological Professors at Cambridge!

And, *thirdly*, are you not accustomed to treat the objections of your pupils to your favorite opinions in an illiberal manner? I know that you and your colleague request the students to make their remarks. But how often are their observations treated with ridicule, with contempt, with impatience, with peevishness, more especially if they are in opposition to any of the articles of your human formulary of faith? Is this the way you encourage the spirit of free inquiry and religious liberty?

And, *fourthly*, have not students in your Seminary been cruelly persecuted for controverting some of your favorite opinions? Take one example of no very distant date. As your respected friend, Dr. Woods, had the principal hand in this particular instance, I will put a few questions to his conscience. Sir, do you recollect one James Kimball? Did you not summon him to your room on a certain evening? Had you then seen any fault in him? Had he been guilty of no offence but the one you specified? — that of making his classmates smile by the dissertations which he read in your presence? Was not the real cause of grievance a very different thing? Were you not offended because he was courageous enough to controvert some of your favorite positions? *So he firmly believed until the hour of his death.* And did you not again summon him to your room near the close of the second year of his course? Of what crime had he then been guilty? Had he committed any offence against morality or religion? Did you even charge him with any? Did you not affirm that you could name no fault? — *that you could not put your finger upon any?* Did you not studiously avoid making any accusation against him whatever? Did you not know, that as a diligent student, and a plain, conscientious Christian, he had done nothing of which he ought to be ashamed? Why then did you endeavour to intimidate and dishearten a man who had made such exertions and sacrifices to acquire an education? — who had been encouraged to work his way through college by the hope of being useful in the ministry? — who had already been nearly two years in your Seminary without reproach? Why did you wish to discourage such a man by threatening to deprive him of the pecuniary assistance

which was bestowed on others, whose intellectual, moral, and religious qualifications were not superior to his? Why did you advise him to give up the idea he had so fondly cherished of becoming a minister of the gospel? Why did you attempt to drive him from the institution without the testimonials usually given to those who leave before their course of study is completed? Was it right thus to blast the sacred hopes for which he had toiled seven or eight of the best years of manhood? — and for no fault you could name, for no crime on which you could put your finger? Were you not in reality afraid or ashamed to name the only offence of which you considered him guilty? — that of controverting some of your favorite opinions in your presence? And because he gave an honest account of your treatment of him to the President of the Trustees of Phillips Academy, did you not pursue him with an unrelenting spirit? Did you not require him to retract what he had written, to do what his own conscience must have considered base wickedness, or suffer the consequences? And simply because he could not righteously make such a recantation as was satisfactory to *yourself*, was he not publicly and disgracefully expelled from your Seminary? — and expelled too at the very moment his health was evidently declining? — and declining too as he and *others* firmly believed under the rod of cruel persecution? And afterward did you not even publicly forbid his attending morning and evening prayers in the chapel? After he had been thus driven to his native home, with the stigma of your expulsion on his character, did he not exhibit the appearance of a broken-hearted man the remainder of his days? And who can tell how much unkindness contributed to the very destruction of his life? Can you look back upon your treatment of James Kimball with an approving conscience? Can you affirm in the presence of your omniscient Judge, that you granted him the rights of free inquiry and religious liberty? Let me whisper one word in your ear. Remember, that all the circumstances of this unhappy and melancholy case have been recorded by a faithful hand, and that their publication will not be withheld from the community for ever.

And, *finally*, has not a late Professor in your Seminary been cruelly persecuted for pursuing an independent course? I allude to the case of the Rev. Dr. Murdock. Did not your difficulties with this colleague originate with Dr. Woods? Did he not afterwards enlist the feelings of the other Professors on his side? Was not the principal cause of your opposition to him occasioned by his unwillingness to pursue your plans and measures? Did you not endeavour to chastise him for his heretical Sermon on the Atonement? Did not the Directors of the Seminary request his opinion respecting any improvements in the instruction or government of the Institution? Did they not promise him their confidence, if he would speak freely concerning the existing evils of the school? Did he not rely upon their honor, and give his

written opinion of the other Professors? Did he not describe yourself as exemplifying many of the characteristics of a Jesuit? Did not the Directors then betray his confidence? Did not these "portraits" cause your opposition to increase even to enmity? Was not a generous sum then offered him if he would resign his office? After it was discovered that he would not be bribed, was he not dismissed by a vote of the Directors? And was not the aid of the Supreme Court called in to confirm their decision? While his trial was pending, did you not forbid the students visiting him? Did you not prevent some from going to his house to recite to Mr. Gibbs? Did you not aim to excite a prejudice against him in the community? Did he not declare, that the records of the Inquisition could scarcely furnish an instance of such unjustifiable and cruel persecution? Is he not prevented from giving a history of the whole affair to the public, for fear his exposure of the iniquity of some concerned would greatly injure the cause of orthodoxy? Can you affirm that all your proceedings in relation to him were consistent with religious liberty? Remember, that many of the facts in his case have been faithfully recorded, and will not be withheld from the public for ever. In view of all these measures, I must conclude that free inquiry and religious liberty are not enjoyed by the students in your Theological Seminary.

6. *Misrepresentation. Sixthly.* Look at some of the orthodox misrepresentation of unitarians and unitarianism. I would gladly omit any statement of facts under this name; but a solemn sense of duty compels me to treat this unpleasant topic with truth and firmness. I feel bound to declare, that some individuals in good standing among your leaders, have circulated most slanderous reports respecting the character and opinions of unitarians. My limits will permit me to notice but *four* different classes of misrepresentations in general circulation among the orthodox. And *first*, look at those untruths which strike at the very foundation of our moral character, and which, if believed, must utterly ruin our influence as ministers of the gospel. So many instances of this kind now rush on my recollection, that I find it difficult to make a selection. One example is this. A unitarian minister, the son of an orthodox clergyman, was ordained over a society in Plymouth county. An orthodox Christian in the vicinity took pains to circulate the report, that this man preached his father's orthodox sermons; and that there was an open disagreement between the sentiments of his discourses and his unitarian prayers. — Another instance is this. An orthodox deacon in Middlesex county reported that a unitarian minister in the neighbouring town had declared to his people, that he did not believe a word of the Bible. — A third case is this. An orthodox clergyman in this county informed a lady who had left his meeting, that the unitarian preacher in the same town preached sentiments which he did not himself believe. — A fourth instance is

this. Two orthodox ministers were travelling in the stage with two unitarian church members. One of them asserted, that the present Professor of Pulpit Eloquence and Pastoral Care in the University at Cambridge, then residing in Europe for his health, had renounced Christianity, and become an infidel. — As a fifth example, I will take one of the multitude which have been circulated respecting myself. The orthodox minister in this place has lately stated, that when I was journeying in New Hampshire, last season, I called at the house of an orthodox lady; that she asked me if I "was willing to enter the eternal world with my present views and feelings;" that after remaining silent and thoughtful some time, I boldly answered — "No," I was not willing. Whether the Reverend gentleman believed this story when he circulated it or not, is not for me to determine. I must however say, that had I believed a similar report concerning him, I should not have whispered it about among a few females; but I should have felt it my duty to expose his hypocrisy by proclaiming the evidence on the house-top. I now declare, that the statement is an absolute falsehood, made out of whole cloth, having not even the shadow of a circumstance in truth for a foundation. And I must also proclaim, that if this man, or his deacon, or his church, continue to circulate the report after reading this, I shall be obliged to consider them as guilty of wilful slander. Such then is a bare specimen of those misrepresentations with which the orthodox atmosphere is surcharged. These are, indeed, sufficiently aggravated to have been propagated by professing Christians; but they are mild in comparison with some which have come to my knowledge. I have taken these cases in preference, because they can be readily proved before a legal tribunal.

Now, Sir, will you not pronounce such a practice most base and unchristian? And do those individuals who keep such ruinous misrepresentations in circulation really believe them to be very truths? Look at the examples stated. Do they not carry the evidence of falsehood in their very front? Why then are they repeated by intelligent persons? Is it not done to injure our influence and usefulness with the ignorant? — to keep them from hearing our preaching, or reading our publications, or becoming acquainted with our sentiments? And it is a fact, that our very honesty has been suspected by the less informed of your party, and our characters have suffered in the estimation of unitarians at a distance, by such slanderous statements. But this is not the worst of the case. The cause of Christ has been greatly injured; and the reputation of your clergy has suffered exceedingly. I state the following fact with extreme reluctance; but I utter the literal truth, when I declare, that candid men have lost their confidence in the moral integrity of several of your lay and clerical leaders; and that the following by-word is in the mouths of no small portion of the community; "Some orthodox ministers will lie." Such a state of

things is extremely injurious to the interests of our common faith; and I do hope my labors will be rewarded by turning the attention of all concerned to this most important topic.

And, *secondly*, look at those misrepresentations which relate to the progress of unitarian sentiments. Orthodox leaders in this region have zealously endeavoured to make people at a distance believe, that unitarianism was on the decline, while orthodoxy was on the increase. One most deceptive mode of leaving such an impression has been, to boast on every convenient opportunity of the number of new churches lately established within this Commonwealth. And such statements have been strengthened by the circulation of such misrepresentations as the following. It has been reported, that one and another unitarian preacher had renounced their liberal sentiments and embraced orthodox views. It has been reported, that one and another unitarian society in Boston had dwindled away; and that the church in which Dr. Channing officiated had been closed, on account of secessions to the orthodox. Now there is no need of contradicting such statements in this vicinity, for we are assured that they are without the least foundation in truth.

And, Sir, have the leading orthodox in this vicinity really believed such representations? Have they regarded unitarianism as on the decline? Your letter furnishes conclusive evidence as to your own opinion. But if any have credited such stories, I pity their credulity, and rejoice in their disappointment. I hope no one has engaged in such a course, to influence that class of weak-minded and unstable Christians, who always endeavour to side with the majority, and measure the success of truth by numbers. That persons at a distance have been deceived by such published and unpublished statements, I do positively know. Now were I called upon to distinguish any one fact, which indicated the progress of unitarian sentiments, I should mention the recent erection of so many little orthodox meeting-houses. For in the first place, many of them are built in towns which were once wholly orthodox, but are now so completely unitarian, that not one fifth, tenth, twentieth, fiftieth, or even a hundredth part attend orthodox preaching. In the second place, several of the new houses of worship have been erected in places, where orthodox ministers have been settled to this very time. And being now removed from their pastoral connexion either by death or dismission, the unitarian majorities of their hearers have settled ministers of their own sentiments. So that small remnants have been obliged to beg funds for building another church. Something like eight instances of this character have occurred during the past year; and there are more than eight other societies which are now dissatisfied with the exclusive measures of their present orthodox pastors. Besides all this, it is well known, that unitarians constitute a considerable portion of most orthodox societies

in the State; so that there can be no doubt your generosity will be heavily taxed for years to come for the erection of new orthodox meeting-houses, which may be pointed out as the standing evidence of the progress of orthodoxy. If unitarians were to adopt a similar course of proceeding, how many churches, as large and respectable as those organized by the orthodox, do you suppose they might establish in one year?

And, *thirdly*, look at those misrepresentations which relate to the belief of unitarians. Orthodox individuals have greatly misrepresented our peculiar opinions even in this Commonwealth; but the farther you remove from the land of the Pilgrims, the greater the misrepresentation of unitarianism. Gross misstatements are kept in circulation by the intelligent and influential; and even by ministers of the gospel, who have no right to be thus ignorant on such a question. Ask what unitarians believe and disbelieve, and you will hear some one of the following answers. They believe in one God, but they deny the Saviour; they deny the Scriptures; they deny future punishment; they have a new Bible; they require nothing but a moral life; they expect to save themselves by their works. Such are a specimen of the untruths in circulation among the orthodox concerning the religious sentiments of unitarians.

Now, Sir, I wish to ask one or two questions. Do those who circulate such misrepresentations really believe them to be very truths? If so, I pity their ignorance; if not, I tremble for their wickedness. I must say, that some instances have come to my knowledge which indicate a want of moral principle. I would not be uncharitable. But I cannot resist conclusive evidence. And what is gained to your party by such a course? Nothing; but very much will be eventually lost. The progress of unitarian views may be retarded for a limited period; but retarded only that their future spread may be more rapid. For when that large class of professing Christians, who have taken the Bible as the standard of their faith, shall discover that their present sentiments are essentially unitarian, and that a great deception has been practised in relation to our real opinions, you may be assured that a powerful and extensive reaction will take place. This has already been the case in repeated instances. Were this the proper place, I could relate many interesting circumstances of this character which occurred under my own observation in the western country. If unitarians are only faithful to themselves and their cause, if they will proclaim their peculiar opinions with plainness and freedom, they will inevitably secure an abundant increase of their denomination. The community simply need information concerning our real belief, and they are already on unitarian ground.

And, *fourthly*, look at the misrepresentations of the tendency of the unitarian faith. Many orthodox individuals have attempted to make

the less informed portion of the community believe that unitarianism is an unsafe system. Their statement is frequently worded in this manner. If orthodoxy should prove false, we shall all be still safe on unitarian ground; but if unitarianism should prove false, none but the orthodox are on a sure foundation. Orthodoxy therefore whether true or false, is an infinitely safer system than unitarianism. In this way an attempt is made to increase the orthodox numbers.

Now, Sir, does an individual of good understanding believe this statement? I cannot conceive it possible. It appears to me that the very opposite of this assertion must strike even a child as the literal truth, Just bring to mind one or two articles of your creed. If orthodoxy should prove true, are we not all perfectly safe for this world? Most assuredly. For here is the Calvinistic belief on this point. "That by Adam's fall his posterity *lost their free will, being put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatsoever they do or do not, whether it be good or evil; being thereunto predestinated by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God.*" This is plain and explicit. We are under an unavoidable necessity to do or not to do, what we actually perform or omit, whether good or bad. We have no power then to do any thing different. And if we cannot alter any thing, why should we trouble ourselves about our opinions or actions? Can we be any safer for this world? And is not the same thing true in relation to eternity? Certainly. For here is the Calvinistic belief on this question. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death. Those angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and *their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.*" This is equally plain and explicit. The number of those who are to be saved or damned is unalterably fixed. So that if we are of the elect, we shall be saved, do what we may; but if we are of the reprobate, we must be damned, do what we can. No exertions on our part can therefore alter our destiny. Is it not then as clear as daylight, that if orthodoxy prove true, every soul of the human family is as safe for time and eternity as he can possibly be; and that no one can possibly do any thing but what is foreordained, or be damned if he has been elected to salvation?

But perhaps you will aver, that unitarians are not of the number of the elect. Very well. This thing is unalterably fixed by the Almighty, and why should we trouble ourselves about what we cannot alter or amend? But on your own ground, I know not but we are as sure of being the elect as the orthodox. For some of your writers have declared that the Lord selects the vilest sinners for heaven; and you have long been endeavoring to make the public believe that unitarians were among the most vile. But admitting that we are of the number of the

non-elect, who has commissioned you to torment us before our time? And if every thing is to take place in your heaven according to the representations of some of your preachers, I am not sure but ours will be the preferable condition. The great New England divine, the late Rev. Dr. Edwards assures us, that the elect are to have their joys increased by witnessing the torments of the damned. But let us have his own words. "*The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever.* It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, *but it will really make their happiness the greater*, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness. *It will give them a more lively relish of it;* it will make them prize it the more, when they see others who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged into such misery, and they so distinguished. Oh it will make them sensible how happy they are! A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure." This is likewise sufficiently clear and intelligible. Now, Sir, I am so constituted, that seeing the pains even of an animal gives me very unpleasant feelings. I cannot witness the wretched condition of a drunken beggar at my door without experiencing considerable suffering. I cannot stand beside the bed of a diseased and distressed friend without much agitation and great misery. And if I must become so completely hardened, as to take delight in observing the distress even of the vilest sinners; if I must become so thoroughly brutalized, as to exult in witnessing the excruciating torments of my acquaintances; if I must become so perfectly demonized, as to have my joys eternally increased by beholding the agonizing writhings of my friends, in the ever enduring, and unmitigated torments of hell, I can truly say,—Good Lord deliver me from such a heaven.

But this is not the worst feature in the orthodox creed. This same divine assures us, that the being we call Father will be the eternal enemy and tormentor of his own children without any fault of their own. Let us have his own words. "The wicked in hell will not be able in that conflict to overcome their *enemy*, and to deliver themselves. God will then undertake to deal with them, *will gird himself with might to execute wrath, will be their enemy, and will act the part of an enemy with a witness.* After you have endured these torments millions of ages, you shall know that you are not one whit nearer the end of your torments; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend for ever and ever; and that your souls which have been agitated by the wrath of God all this while, yet will still exist to bear more wrath; *your bodies which will have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which will not have been at all shortened by what has been past.*" The Being who is

thus to torment frail human beings for what was no fault of their own, you would have us call by the name of *Father*. Sir, I am a father. I find implanted in my breast feelings of unutterable tenderness and affection towards my children. I would no more do them an injury, than I would cut off my right hand. I would no more expose them to unnecessary suffering, than I would pluck out my right eye. I cannot see them endure the pains of sickness without great anxiety and affliction. I could not hold even the finger of my child in the flames until consumed, without experiencing the most exquisite agony. I could not hold his body on the glowing coals one hour, without losing the use of my reason. And with such a nature, can I love a Being who brought children into existence without their consent, and for no fault of their own plunged them into the scalding, suffocating fire of burning brimstone, and watched their agonizing torments, not for one hour, or year, or age; but for millions of ages; millions of eternities? Can I wish to imitate such a disposition? No. If Calvinism be true, we are all as safe as we can be; and nothing can be lost by being excluded from such a Father and such a heaven. But if unitarianism be true, the case is entirely reversed. For then we have a Father indeed, who will permit us to enjoy just so much happiness as we have moral goodness, and to suffer just so much misery as we have wickedness. Are not such orthodox misrepresentations subversive of religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism?

I have room for no more facts in my first letter. I did intend to notice the measures of some of your Societies, and to give some account of the immense funds of your denomination, the means employed for their increase, and the sectarian character of many important proceedings. But I have already far exceeded the limits of my original intention. I have therefore only to ask you and the public, whether the six classes of facts which I have produced, do not perfectly demonstrate the following proposition. *The measures, attempted and adopted by the leaders of the orthodox denomination in our country for the preservation and propagation of their peculiar views of religion, are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.*

LETTER II.

Reverend Sir,

I now proceed to notice some of the assertions, insinuations, and accusations contained in your Letter on Religious Liberty. As your friends have repeatedly advanced the same and similar opinions, I shall occasionally allude to their statements and publications. I think that the facts I shall now adduce, and the arguments I shall advance, will prove two propositions. *First*, THAT MANY OF YOUR REMARKS, DECLARATIONS, AND DENUNCIATIONS ARE UNFOUNDED, UNRIGHTEOUS, AND UNGENEROUS. And, *secondly*, THAT THE MEASURES ATTEMPTED AND ADOPTED BY THE LEADERS OF THE ORTHODOX DENOMINATION IN OUR COUNTRY, FOR THE PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION OF THEIR PECULIAR VIEWS OF RELIGION, ARE SUBVERSIVE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, FREE INQUIRY, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF CONGREGATIONALISM. To this class of subjects I now solicit your attention.

I. Principles and Doctrines of the Reformers.

Many individuals of your denomination have attempted to make the unlearned part of the community believe these three statements respecting the Reformation: *First*, that the Reformers were very generally agreed in certain grand doctrines of revealed religion. *Secondly*, that the orthodox of the present day substantially adhere to these fundamental articles of the Reformers. And, *thirdly*, that unitarians have departed widely and totally from the great principles of the Reformation. I perceive you have advanced similar sentiments, and attempted to leave similar impressions on the minds of your readers. In support of this assertion, I will quote merely two passages from your Letter. In the first place, you make this strong declaration. "*In heart and soul we agree with the great doctrines of the Reformers, of Calvin and Luther.*" Is not this remark calculated to make people believe that Calvin and Luther were agreed in certain great doctrines? — that these were the doctrines of the Reformation? — and that they are still firmly believed by the orthodox denomination? In the second place, you aver that the orthodox "*choose to walk, and*

insist on walking, in the old paths of the Reformers." Was not this sentence intended to leave the impression, that unitarians persecute the orthodox because they adhere so tenaciously to the grand principles of the Reformation. Unitarians are so often accused of having departed from the great doctrines of the Reformers, that it is quite unnecessary to quote any passage in proof of the charge. Now, Sir, are these three propositions true? Can they be substantiated by any proper evidence? I think not. I will produce the reasons for my opinion. And I believe that the *facts* I shall here adduce will prove at least six particulars.

1. *Reformers.* In the first place, then, who are to be regarded as the principal Reformers? The *first* in the order of time was Martin Luther. He was born in Germany, in the year 1483. He received a classical education in the University of Erfurt. He was distinguished for good natural endowments, close application, and extensive acquirements. He intended to study law; but the sudden death of a friend by lightning induced him to enter a convent of Augustine friars. In 1507, he was admitted to the order of priests. The next year he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the University of Wittenberg; and afterwards he received the appointment of Professor of Divinity in the same Institution. He performed the duties of his station with great fidelity and success. Soon after this period, he became convinced that certain abuses in the Catholic church, of which he was a most zealous member, greatly needed reformation. Without any intention or desire of leaving her communion, he boldly commenced his attacks upon her existing and glaring corruptions. Not long after, he was excommunicated from her fellowship, by the Pope, as an obstinate heretic. This act only served to animate him in accomplishing his good undertaking of delivering religion from human traditions. He was well qualified for a leader in this glorious work, being fearless, learned, and persevering; and, for the times, virtuous and pious. There were indeed many and great defects and blemishes in his temper and character; but such only as were too common in that period of comparative darkness and ignorance. He published many works in Latin and German. He framed a system of ecclesiastical government and theological doctrines; and a large body was then organized as his disciples, and to this day their descendants retain the name of Lutherans.

The *second* Reformer in the order of time was Philip Melancthon. He was also born in Germany, in the year 1495. He completed a classical education at Heidelberg. He was distinguished for superior talents, unwearied diligence, a thorough acquaintance with the ancient languages, and a beautiful classical style of composition. In 1518 he was appointed Professor of Greek at Wittenberg, where Luther was lecturing on theology. They soon became intimate friends; and Luther had the satisfaction of convincing him of the necessity of going

forward in the work of reformation. He was, indeed, well calculated to aid Luther on account of his accurate scholarship, and his elegant style of writing. He was, therefore, chosen to draw up the famous "Augsburg Confession," which contains the creed of the Lutheran church. In some points of doctrine he agreed with Luther; and was satisfied in assisting his exertions, rather than desirous of advancing another system of his own, and organizing a new denomination. He was too amiable, too mild, too retiring, too moderate, too fearful for a leader in that dark and stormy period of the church. For the times, he was a man of superior learning, goodness, and piety. One of his biographers speaks of him in the following terms. "Nature had given Melancthon a peaceable temper, which was but ill suited to the times in which he lived. His moderation served only to be his cross. He was like a lamb in the midst of wolves. Nobody liked his mildness; it looked as if he were lukewarm." He published a large number of works in Latin and German.

The *third* in the order of time, though perhaps the first in reality and importance, was Ulrick Zuingle. He was born in Switzerland, in the year 1487. At the age of eighteen he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Basil. He was soon known as one of the most popular preachers of the age. He was convinced from his own observation, and from his examination of the Scriptures, that a reformation was needed in the Catholic church. He had actually begun the good work in a gentle manner, before he became acquainted with the exertions and writings of Luther. He was encouraged to press forward by the proceedings in Germany, and his exertions were crowned with great and wonderful success. A war, however, soon broke out between the Catholics and Protestants. Zuingle went with his parishioners into the midst of the conflict. In the beginning of the battle, he received a mortal wound, while animating the troops by his exhortations. Some Catholic soldiers soon discovered him, pierced his body through with a sword, and burned it to ashes. He was as great a man as Luther; and exhibited more of the Christian virtues. In his religious opinions, he differed very materially from the two before him, and the two who came next after him. His views were exceedingly liberal, not differing essentially, except in one or two points, from the liberal Christians of the present period. "As to original sin, he considered it as a disposition to do ill, not as actual sin; but he did not think it could bring on man eternal damnation. He rejected the Calvinistic notion of divine decrees. He believed that salvation would be extended not only to unbaptized infants, but also to heathens of a virtuous character." He was undoubtedly the best, the most Christian, of all of the Reformers. He published many works, mostly in the German language.

The *fourth* in point of time was John Calvin. He was born in France, in the year 1509. He was originally designed for a Catholic priest; but for a time he gave his attention to the study of the civil law. He early became a convert to the cause of the Reformation; and published his "Institutes of the Christian Religion" at a very early period of his labors. In 1536, he was chosen preacher and Professor of Divinity at Geneva. With the exception of a short banishment, he continued in these offices during the remainder of his life. He has been accused of many failings; among others, his excessive ambition, his tyrannical disposition, his arbitrary exercise of power, and his unchristian cruelty. It is a well known fact, that he persecuted those who would not conform to his standard of belief on doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions. He caused Jerome Bolsec, a French physician, to be banished for his heretical opinions. He served George Blandrata, an Italian physician, who denied the doctrine of the trinity, in a similar manner. His treatment of Sebastian Castalio, his friend and regent of the College, a great, learned, and good man, was much more severe and unchristian. And his causing the death of Michael Servetus has left an indelible stain of disgrace on his character. The only apology for all these unchristian persecutions is to be found in the history of that period. Calvin himself published a work to prove that it was lawful to destroy heretics; that is, those who differed from his interpretations of Scripture. He was a man of uncommon mental powers, of extensive acquirements, and respectable piety for the times in which he lived. His system of church government, and his views of the Lord's Supper, differed materially from those of Luther. On many other points he differed not only from Luther, but most essentially from the other Reformers. He established a system of faith peculiar to himself; and his followers from that time to the present have been called Calvinists.

The last of those, who deserve a place among the principal Reformers, was Michael Servetus. He was born in Spain, in the year fifteen hundred and nine. He studied law three years in his native land. Hearing of the progress of the Reformation in other parts of Europe, he devoted his time and attention to the Scriptures. Taking these for his only guide of faith, and having at this time no connexion with the other Reformers, he immediately renounced, among other Catholic absurdities, the doctrine of the trinity. He then wrote a work on the Error of the Trinity, in seven books. As it could not be published in Spain without exposing his life, he went to Germany where more liberty was enjoyed, and there gave it to the world with his own name attached. He probably thought that this error would be one of the first to be rejected by those who took the Bible as their only standard of religious truth. He was sadly mistaken in this supposition. The publication produced a great sensation among all classes of the community,

and was of course condemned by most of the leaders in the Reformation. Next year he published two dialogues to explain and defend his views on the subject of the Trinity. Soon after this, he repaired to Paris, and pursued the study of medicine. Having obtained a medical degree, he commenced the practice of the profession in that city and also engaged in lecturing on Geography and Mathematics. All this time he was in constant correspondence with Calvin. He spoke to him with all that unreserved freedom which is manifested by one devoted friend towards another. These familiar and confidential letters were afterwards used by Calvin to destroy his correspondent. In fifteen hundred and fifty-three, he published a large work without his name, entitled "The Restoration of Christianity." In this book, he not only pursues his attack on the trinity, but inveighs severely against other Catholic absurdities. The Catholics, having authority then in France, endeavoured to discover the author, that they might bring him to punishment. It has been proved to my satisfaction, that Calvin was so base as to give them information, and to send something like twenty of the Latin letters of Servetus, which might be used in his trial. He was accordingly seized and imprisoned; but soon after made his escape, and started for Switzerland. On his way he passed through Geneva, where Calvin reigned. He went in disguise, and did not mean to be known in the city. But Calvin discovered the fact on his first entrance into the place, and immediately gave information to the magistrates, who placed him in prison. After suffering various and most inhuman cruelties in his confinement, he was brought to trial, which lasted for a long period. A servant of Calvin was his accuser. A manuscript, which he had put into the hands of Calvin some years before for his friendly criticisms, was produced on his trial. He was finally condemned to be burnt alive in a slow fire of green wood. And we are informed that his sufferings were excruciating beyond description, and lasted more than two hours. From all accounts, it appears that Servetus was as learned, as accomplished, as zealous, and as pious, as any of the other Reformers. His system of belief differed from those of the others; and those, who adhered to his denial of the trinity, were called Servetists. Some of them were murdered for their heretical opinions; and so great was the persecution of unitarians, that the sect was but small for many years. But had Servetus possessed as much power as Calvin, I have no doubt but the prevailing system of belief in the reformed churches, would then and now have been unitarianism.

As some persons may wish to know precisely what hand Calvin had in the burning of Servetus, I will give a few extracts from his own writings. My first quotation will show that Calvin had determined in his own mind to bring Servetus to death for his heretical opinions. Here are the words: "Servetus has lately written to me, and sent me at the same time a large book stuffed with idle fancies, and full of

arrogance. He says I shall find in it admirable things, and such as have been unheard of hitherto. He offers to come here if I like it; but I will not engage my word. *For if he comes, and if any regard be had to my authority, I shall not suffer him to escape without losing his life.*" — My next quotation will prove that Calvin caused the imprisonment and prosecution of Servetus. Here are the words of Calvin himself: "I do not pretend to deny that I was the cause of his being apprehended in this city, that he might be put upon his trial. Let men of impious minds, and malignant tongues, exclaim against me ever so much, I frankly own and openly profess, *that it was by my exertions the plaintiff appeared against him; nor do I deny that the form of his indictment was drawn up by my advice. Neither do I pretend but that I really thought it my duty to do all that lay in my power to* CRUSH *such an obstinate and irreclaimable fellow, that the contagion might spread no farther.*" — My next extract will prove that Calvin wished Servetus condemned to death. It is from a letter written during the trial. Here are the very words of Calvin: "We are now engaged with Servetus. Perhaps he only designed to go through this city; for we do not yet know what reason moved him to come hither. He has been discovered, and I have been of the opinion that he should be arrested. *I hope he will be condemned to death; but I wish the severity of his punishment may be softened. Spero capitale saltem fore judicium; pœnæ vero atrocitatem remitti cupio.*" From this latter clause, some have supposed that Calvin wished a punishment less severe than death might be inflicted on Servetus. But this is altogether a mistake. He merely wished that Servetus might be put to death in some easier mode, than by burning in a slow fire of green wood. This is fully and clearly proved by another passage written after the sentence of death had been pronounced. These are the words of Calvin: "Nevertheless he has been condemned without any dispute. He will be executed to-morrow. We have endeavoured *to change that kind of death; but in vain. Genus mortis conati sumus mutare; sed frustra.*" This must be satisfactory to all. I think any one who will investigate this subject properly must come to the conclusion, that Calvin was the sole cause of the imprisonment of Servetus; that the plaintiff appeared at his request; that the indictment was drawn up by his advice; that he furnished the evidence of his heresy; that he did all in his power to have him sentenced to death; and that he merely petitioned the magistrates to have one kind of death exchanged for another more sudden and less excruciating. And when I hear men of education deny these facts, I am truly astonished; for I know not whether to attribute such denial to ignorance or depravity. Such then is a very brief and imperfect notice of the principal Reformers. This sketch seemed necessary to render my following remarks fully intelligible to the unlearned reader.

2. *Principles of the Reformation.* In the *second* place, what are the grand principles of the Reformation? They are the fundamental points of difference between the Catholics and Reformers. They are the very pillars of Protestantism. They are those self-evident truths in which the Reformers were fully agreed in theory. They are but two in number. What then is the *first*, great, essential principle of the Reformation? I cannot express it better than in your own words. "THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE SUFFICIENT AND ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE." Now which denomination adheres most firmly to this grand pillar of Protestantism? Let facts decide.

Does the orthodox denomination make the Scriptures the SUFFICIENT and ONLY rule of faith and practice? Let us descend to particulars. When you induct a Professor into his responsible office in your theological seminaries, do you make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? No. Look at Andover and Princeton. Let the Professor elect adhere to the Scriptures ever so firmly, still you will not permit him to enter upon the duties of the station, unless he will first profess his hearty belief in all the articles of a long human creed, and his solemn determination to teach his pupils no opinions contrary to its published statements. And unless he will renew his sacred obligations every five years, he must be excluded from the institution, and followed into the world by the reproaches and persecutions of the leaders of your party, although he still retains his Christian character and his firm adherence to the Scriptures. When you admit a believer to the ordinances of Christian baptism and the Lord's supper, do you make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? No. Look at the terms of admission and excommunication in orthodox churches. Let the candidate for membership adhere to the Scriptures ever so firmly, still you will not admit him to your communion, unless he will first profess his hearty belief in all the articles of a long human creed. And should a prayerful perusal of the sacred writings lead him to reject any of its statements, you will neither give him a dismission from your body nor a recommendation to a more liberal church, but proceed to excommunicate him for heresy, although he still retains his Christian character, and his firm adherence to the Scriptures. When you determine the principles of ministerial intercourse, do you make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? No. Look at the proceedings in Baltimore and especially in Massachusetts. Let the minister be orthodox in sentiment and adhere to the Scriptures ever so firmly, still you will not welcome him to pulpit exchanges, unless he will subscribe to the articles of a long human creed. And if he should either deny the utility of human creeds, or refuse to enter the exclusive system, he is shut out from your society and sympathy, and either his pulpit declared vacated, or unhallowed exertions are used to render his church vacant, although he

still retains his ministerial character, his orthodoxy, and his firm adherence to the Scriptures. When you settle the terms on which the proprietors in your meeting-houses may vote for their own ministers, do you make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? No. Look at those churches which you have lately endeavoured to chain down to orthodoxy with the everlasting fetters of trust-deeds. Let the owners of the house adhere to the Scriptures ever so firmly, still you will not allow them to vote for the pastor they must maintain, unless they will first profess their hearty belief in all the articles of a long human creed. And if a prayerful perusal of the Bible should compel them to dissent from the declarations of this human standard, they must forfeit their right of voting for their own preacher, and look to their wiser neighbours to place one over them, although they still retain their Christian character and their firm adherence to the Scriptures. Many more instances of a similar character might be mentioned; but these are sufficient to convince the public, that the first, great, fundamental principle of the Reformation, is palpably, and habitually, and systematically violated by the leaders of the orthodox denomination.

On the other hand, does the unitarian denomination make the Scriptures the SUFFICIENT and ONLY rule of faith and practice? Let us refer to the same class of particulars. When they induct a Professor into his responsible office in their theological seminaries, do they make the Scriptures their *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? Yes. Look at the Divinity School at Cambridge. The Professor elect is required only to profess his firm belief in the Scriptures, his determination to study them with prayerful attention, and his desire to communicate to his pupils the result of his honest investigations. And should his persevering inquiries into the meaning of the sacred writers render him wiser next year than this, still his increase in religious knowledge will not subject him to the loss of his situation, or to the blighting suspicions and cruel insinuations of his whole denomination, so long as he adheres scrupulously to the only infallible standard of divine truth. When they admit a believer to the ordinances of Christian baptism and the Lord's supper, do they make the Scriptures their *sufficient* and *only* guide of faith and practice? Yes. Look at the terms of admission and excommunication in their churches. The candidate for membership is required only to profess his firm belief in the Scriptures, his determination to search them with candor and prayerfulness, and his intention to make them his sole standard of divine truth. And should any circumstance cause him to change his religious opinions, he will be neither excommunicated nor persecuted, but may receive a dismission, and a recommendation to another church, so long as he retains his Christian character and his firm adherence to the Scriptures. When they determine the principles of their ministerial intercourse, do

they make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? Yes. Look at their system of pulpit exchanges. If a minister sustains a fair reputation, and endeavours to make the Scriptures his standard of divine truth, and is acceptable to their hearers, and observes the golden rule when preaching and praying in their pulpits, they will welcome him to ministerial intercourse. And should he believe a little more or a little less than they do themselves, still they will not exclude him from their fellowship, so long as he keeps his peculiarities to himself when addressing their parishioners, and retains his ministerial character and firm adherence to the sacred Scriptures. When they settle the terms on which the proprietors of their meeting-houses may vote for their own ministers, do they make the Scriptures the *sufficient* and *only* rule of faith and practice? Yes. Look at the uniform practice of their congregations. If a person owns a seat in their houses of public worship, he is entitled to vote in the choice of a pastor whom he must aid in supporting. And this right can never be legally taken from him, neither will he surrender it, so long as he preserves any self-respect, or any proper estimate of the value of Christian institutions. Do not these and similar facts fully prove, that the unitarian denomination adheres most firmly to the first great principle of the Reformation? Will you say that they pervert those very Scriptures which they pretend to make their standard of truth and duty? Remember that they have the same right to bring this charge against your party, that you have to cast it upon theirs; and be assured, that they can do it with equal reason, sincerity, and truth. For they really feel as confident that you are the very persons who depart from the plain teachings of revelation, as you can possibly be, that they are the perverters of inspired truth. So that this accusation will not relieve you from the conclusion to which facts have brought us. Must you not then admit, that while unitarians adhere scrupulously to the first principle of the Reformation, the orthodox depart from it most widely in all important particulars? I see not how you or any one can possibly avoid this result of our statements.

And what is the *second* grand principle of the Reformation? I cannot better express it than in the words of another. "ALL MEN HAVE AN EQUAL RIGHT TO STUDY AND UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES FOR THEMSELVES." Were the Reformers agreed in this principle? In words they were. What is the declaration of Luther? "We have not received any authority or power to compel belief. If you are willing to believe, yours will be the benefit; if you refuse to believe, the choice is free to you, and yours alone is the responsibility. We do not unsheathe the sword, neither do we resort to force. Words and arguments are the *only* weapons of our warfare." This looks well on paper. And what was the assertion of Calvin? "Now since the consciences of the faithful, being privileged with the liberty which we have described, have been delivered by the favor of Christ from all necessary obligation to

the observance of those things, in which the Lord hath been pleased they should be kept free, *we conclude they are exempt from all human authority.*" To say that Calvin openly violated this remark both in word and deed, is to publish the literal truth. Now which denomination adheres most firmly to this second pillar of Protestantism? Let facts decide.

Does the orthodox denomination allow all men an EQUAL right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? Let us descend to particulars. When those learned, virtuous, and pious ministers in Connecticut were obliged by a prayerful study of the Scriptures to renounce certain articles of a human creed, why did their orthodox brethren form themselves into an ecclesiastical tribunal; summon these peaceable, faithful, and beloved pastors before them to answer to the charge of heresy; proclaim to the world that they had renounced the Scriptures, denied the Messiah, made shipwreck of the Christian faith, and disqualified themselves for the gospel ministry; and then dissolve their ministerial relation with their several congregations? Was this granting them an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? No; and had they been the majority, would they not have possessed an equal right, and as much reason, to call the self-styled orthodox preachers to account, and punish them for the same crimes in a similar manner? But had they so conducted, would you not have charged them with infringing the rights of private judgment? — When those learned, virtuous, and pious divines in this Commonwealth and in New Hampshire were obliged by a prayerful study of the Scriptures to renounce certain articles of a human creed, why did their orthodox brethren form themselves into ecclesiastical courts; exclude them from their councils and associations; condemn their publications as false and heretical; and hold them up in the public prints as objects of fear and persecution? Was this granting them an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? No; and had they been the majority, would they not have possessed an equal right, and as much reason, to call the self-styled orthodox preachers to account, and to punish them for the same crimes in a similar manner? But had they so conducted, would you not have charged them with infringing the rights of private judgment? — When some hundred ministers and societies in Massachusetts were obliged by a prayerful study of the Scriptures to renounce certain articles of a human creed, why did their orthodox brethren pronounce upon them sentence of condemnation; deny them the Christian name, rights, and privileges; call them emissaries of Satan, Devils, and worse than the Devil; and consign them to endless torments in hell? Was this granting them an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? No; and had they been the majority, would they not have possessed an equal right, and as much reason, to call

the self-styled orthodox to account, and punish them for the same crimes in a similar manner? — When those sincere, virtuous, and pious disciples in many of your churches were obliged by a prayerful study of the Scriptures to renounce certain articles of a human creed, why did their orthodox brethren call them to account for their honest opinions; condemn them as heretics; excommunicate them from their fellowship; and send them forth to the world as suspicious, dangerous, polluting characters? Was this granting them an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? No; and had they been the majority, would they not have possessed an equal right, and as much reason, to condemn the self-styled orthodox, and to punish them for the same crimes in a similar manner? But had they so conducted, would you not have charged them with infringing the rights of private judgment? More instances might be mentioned; but these are sufficient to convince the public, that the second principle of the Reformation is palpably, habitually, and systematically violated by the orthodox denomination.

On the other hand, does the unitarian denomination allow all men an EQUAL right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? Let us examine their conduct in similar particulars. There have been one or more instances, in which a unitarian minister embraced orthodox sentiments. And what was the conduct of his liberal brethren? Did they call him to an account for his honest opinions; proclaim to the world that he had renounced the Scriptures, denied the Messiah, made shipwreck of the Christian faith, and disqualified himself for the gospel ministry; and then dissolve his ministerial connexion with his congregation? No; nothing of the kind. They left him and his own society to settle their difficulties according to the established rules of congregationalism. And was not this allowing him an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for himself? Certainly. For they had as much right, and reason, and power, to punish him for his heresy, as any orthodox body ever had, to punish one of their number for embracing unitarianism. — It has happened in one or more instances, that a member of a unitarian association has embraced orthodox sentiments. And what was the conduct of his liberal brethren? Did they send a committee to catechize him as to his honest opinions; exclude him from their body on account of his errors; endeavour to create divisions in his parish; and do all in their power to injure his influence, usefulness, and happiness? No; nothing of the kind. They left him to pursue his own chosen course, unblamed, unmolested, unpunished. And was not this granting him an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for himself? Certainly. For they had the same right, and reason, and power, to punish him for his heresy, as any orthodox body ever had to punish one of their number for embracing unitarianism. — Orthodox ministers formerly lived on terms of ministerial intercourse with their

unitarian brethren. A combination has latterly been formed by the leaders of the party to prevent the interchange of kind offices and professional labors. And what has been the conduct of their liberal brethren? Have they resented such a measure with unchristian reproaches; and endeavoured to ruin their peace, and prosperity, and enjoyment? No; nothing of the kind. They have merely pointed out the illiberality and oppression and unchristian character of such a course; and left them to reap the bitter consequences of their chosen measure. And was not this granting them an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves? Certainly. For they have as much right, and reason, and power, to punish them for this departure from former practice, as any orthodox parsons ever possessed to punish any of their number for still adhering to this ancient usage. — It has happened in one or more instances, that a unitarian church-member has embraced orthodox sentiments. And what was the conduct of his liberal brethren? Did they call him to account for his honest opinions; forbid his giving the reasons of his change of faith; excommunicate him from their fellowship; and cast him forth as an apostate, infidel, demon? No; nothing of the kind. They deprived him of no privilege; accused him of no crime; left him unmolested in his enjoyments, and gave him a dismission and recommendation when respectfully requested. And was not this granting him an *equal* right to study and understand the Scriptures for himself? Certainly. For they had as much right, and reason, and power, to punish him for his heresies, as any orthodox church ever possessed to punish one of their members for embracing unitarianism. More examples might be produced; but these are sufficient to convince the public that this principle of Protestantism is sacredly observed by the unitarian denomination. And these two are the only great, essential, fundamental principles of the Reformation, as every man of education will acknowledge. And for my own part, I can see no way, in which the unitarians could have observed them more sacredly; and on the other hand, I know of no method, in which the orthodox could have disregarded them more palpably. But I leave the public to draw their own conclusion from the evidence presented.

3. *Doctrines of the Reformation.* In the *third* place, were the Reformers agreed in any particular set of *reformed doctrines?* No; on those points in which they differed from the Catholics, they had very little agreement among themselves. They were agreed in the two great principles of Protestantism; in salvation without human merit; and in certain practical abuses of the mother church. Beyond these, they came to no agreement on any important topic which they discussed. They formed different *systems* of theology as well as of church government. In proof of these assertions, I will now adduce satisfactory evidence. Will you admit the testimony of the learned and ortho-

dox Dr. Campbell? Well, here you have his own words. "It is admitted also as *undeniable*, that the Reformers, who arose about the same time in different places, *differed* on *several articles* in the *doctrine* which they taught. As long as they confined themselves to the abuses which had, from worldly motives been introduced into the church, there was a wonderful harmony among them all. The sale of indulgences, the celebacy of the clergy enforced by canon, the withholding of the eucharistical cup from the people, the religious service in an unknown tongue, the worship paid to images and relics, the invocation of saints and angels, the clerical usurpations of secular power, the rendering of church censures subservient to the avarice and ambition of ecclesiastics, were *practical* corruptions in worship and discipline, wherein all the Reformers agreed. As long as they confined their declamation to church tyranny, to the correction of superstitious and idolatrous practices, to those clerical artifices for enhancing power and wealth, which were subversive of sound morality, they concurred harmoniously in every thing; but no sooner did they enter on the endless and unprofitable discussion of abstruse and unedifying questions, of which holy writ has either said nothing, or given no decision, than *their harmony was at an end.* They subdivided immediately. They alarmed those who were inclined to think favorably of their cause. They made many retreat who had made advances. They supplied their enemy with arms against them, and made enemies of friends; inasmuch as many became enemies to one another. Then arose the distinction of Lutheran, and Zuinglian, and Calvinist, and Sacramentarian, and Ubiquitarian; the *first three as implying, not barely the disciples of such particular teachers, but the partisans of* DIFFERENT SYSTEMS." Does not this extract establish the truth of my positions most conclusively? But I have much more evidence directly to the point. Will you take the testimony of the great and learned Erasmus, who was in reality a distinguished Reformer, and when invited by the others to join their company, returned the following answer? "You all appeal to the pure word of God, whereof you think yourselves true interpreters. Agree then among yourselves about its meaning, before you pretend to give laws to the world." Will you take the evidence of Calvin himself? Here you have his affidavit. "*It is of importance that no suspicions of the divisions which are amongst us descend to future ages; for it is* RIDICULOUS BEYOND IMAGINATION, *that, after having broken with all the world, we should,* FROM THE BEGINNING OF OUR REFORMATION, AGREE SO ILL AMONG OURSELVES." More quotations might be introduced; but these are sufficient to convince the public, that there was no agreement among the Reformers, in any particular set of reformed doctrines.

But perhaps you will ask if the Reformers were not agreed in the great doctrines of the trinity, the deity of Christ, the atonement, the utter depravity of human nature, unconditional election, endless

punishment, and the like. These, my dear Sir, *were not the doctrines of the Reformation. They are the very doctrines which were* NOT REFORMED. They were not allowed to be examined. Servetus did indeed attempt to reform the doctrine of the trinity, but lost his life in the worthy undertaking. Zuingle did likewise reject some of the other human traditions, but was severely censured for his liberality. The rest of the Reformers received them without discussion, and for this reason they form no part of the doctrines of the Reformation. No; they are really and *literally* the doctrines of the Catholic church; for more or less of them had been actually voted into her creed by the holding up of priestly hands, at different times and under various forms; and those which were not so introduced, had been invented and advocated by individual members of her communion, long before the Reformation. It is perfectly absurd, therefore, to call those very doctrines, which had been embraced for years in the Catholic denomination, which were not suffered to be examined at the time of the Reformation, and which are still retained as fundamental articles by the mother church, doctrines of the Reformation. As well may you call the existence of God, the divine origin of Christianity, and the immortality of man, doctrines of the Reformation. I do hope, that honest men will no longer endeavour to impose on themselves and the community, by asserting that the fundamental articles of the Catholic creed were the grand doctrines of the Reformation.

And permit me to inquire, if there was any remarkable agreement between Calvin and Luther, so as to cause you to distinguish these two from the rest of the Reformers? I think not; although I admit that these two did not proceed so far as some others in reforming several Catholic doctrines, and therefore had more points in common. It does appear to me, that they quarrelled in a most shameful manner, and that there has been but precious little harmony among their followers. Did my limits permit, I could produce a great abundance of evidence in proof of these assertions; but I must content myself with a few quotations from their writings. From the commencement of the Reformation, the Calvinists and Lutherans were embroiled in most bitter controversy. At an early period of its progress, a champion was appointed by each party to settle some disputed subjects in public debate. Beza was delegated to defend the Calvinistic doctrine, and Andræ the Lutheran. After a long war of words, in which no difficulties were adjusted, Beza thus declared: "Quia dextras fraternitatis nobis porrigere recusatis, et nos pro fratribus agnoscere non vultis, amicitiæ dextras etiam nolo." The meaning of which is this: "Because you will not give us the right-hand of fellowship, nor acknowledge us as brethren, neither indeed will I extend to you the right-hand of friendship." Does this look like union? Andræ thus answered. "Ergo intermittatur." "Let us then terminate our dis-

pute." The old writer, from whom this fact is taken, thus concludes the account. "Imo creverunt odia." "Thus the enmity of the two parties rather increased." Is this evidence of agreement? But this is only the beginning of testimony. In several of the Lutheran writers of the first respectability, you find the *doctrine* of Calvinism pronounced "sacrilegam, execrandam, abominandam, et diabolicam." "The doctrine of Calvinism is sacrilegious, execrable, abominable, and devilish." Is this the language of Christian fellowship? But let us proceed to the sayings of the great Reformers themselves. Among other points of difference, Luther believed the soul was material, and slept with the body until the resurrection. Calvin was violently opposed to this opinion, and accordingly wrote a book to controvert this dangerous error, entitled, "Psychopannychia." In this work, he calls all who advocate Luther's doctrine of the sleep of the soul, "babblers, madmen, dreamers, and drunkards." Are these the most appropriate expressions of brotherly love? Let us now hear Luther's opinion of the *spirit* of the Calvinists. Here you have it in his own words. "Spiritus Calvinistarum est diabolicus spiritus, mendax spiritus, rebellionis et dissentionis spiritus, fugitivus, inconstans, et vertiginosus spiritus." "The spirit of the Calvinists is a devilish spirit, a lying spirit, a rebellious and quarrelsome spirit, a cowardly, changing, giddy spirit." Remember that these are the kind expressions of Luther's friendship. Let us hear his opinion respecting the *Calvinists themselves*. Here you have it in his own words. "Calvinistæ sunt fanatici, progenies viperina, animicidæ, impii, blasphemi, deceptores, sanguinarii, infernales molossi, Germanici Turcæ, a Sathanâ missi et obsessi, Mahometani baptizati, perdiabolati, transdiabolati, superdiabolati." In Kentucky, I think this would be considered as going for the whole. I would not give the English of this passage, were it not to gratify my orthodox readers with as many of the choice sayings of the venerated Reformer as my limits permit. Here it is. "The Calvinists are fanatics, a progeny of vipers, soul-murderers, impious, blasphemous, deceivers, bloodthirsty, hellish dogs, German Turks, sent and possessed by Satan, baptized Mahometans, very devilish, more than devilish, superlatively devilish." This is pretty strong language for one "pious and blessed" Reformer to use towards the followers of another, with whom he was on terms of perfect agreement. It is certainly rather a novel mode of expressing union, harmony, affection, and cordial co-operation. Had such expressions come from unitarians, would you have regarded them as the most expressive signs of Christian fellowship? I think sufficient evidence has been produced to convince the world's people, that there was no love lost between Calvin and Luther; and that their wonderful agreement in the great doctrines of the Reformation did not produce the most Christian disposition in either. I will only add, that I shall never more be surprised at the denunciations of the

orthodox, while I remember that they proceed from those who "*choose to walk and insist on walking in the old paths of the Reformers.*"

4. *Orthodox agreement with Calvinism.* In the *fourth* place, does the orthodox denomination agree with the peculiar sentiments of John Calvin? I think not generally; but I will not decide the question without evidence. What then are the grand doctrines of Calvinism? Not those surely which he received from his Catholic mother, and which she still teaches to her faithful children. No; the doctrines of Calvinism must be those which were peculiar to Calvin, and which have been honored with his name. Such doctrines do indeed exist. They are called the Five Points of Calvinism. They are so called to distinguish them from Arminianism, or to indicate the particulars in which his doctrine differed from the views of Arminius. What then are these articles. I will give them to you, as agreed upon by the large body of Calvinistic divines at the famous synod of Dort. I take them as abridged by Daniel Tilenus. "Art. I. That God, by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith or obedience whatever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and appointed them, by the same decree, to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity or impenitency. — Art. II. That Jesus Christ hath not suffered death for any other, but for those elect only; having neither had any intent, nor commandment of his Father, to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. — Art. III. That by Adam's fall his posterity lost their free will, being put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatever they do, or do not, whether it be good or evil; being thereunto predestinated by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God. — Art. IV. That God to save his elect from the corrupt mass, doth beget faith in them by a power equal to that whereby he created the world and raised up the dead; insomuch that such, unto whom he gives that grace, cannot reject it, and the rest, being reprobate, cannot accept it. — Art. V. That such as have once received that grace by faith, can never fall from it finally or totally, notwithstanding the most enormous sins they can commit." No one acquainted with the writings of Calvin will deny, that these are his real sentiments; — the five points in which his views differ from Arminianism. Reject these articles, and you reject Calvanism; receive them and you are a Calvinist.

Now does the orthodox denomination at the present day believe these five articles of Calvin, as well as the doctrines of the Catholic church which he retained, and the doctrines of infant damnation and the lawfulness of murdering those who differ from their human standard of religious truth? I am willing to admit that many of the leaders do really believe in all of Calvinism but the two last articles; but I venture to assert that the great majority of professors in orthodox churches do not believe more than one or two points of Calvinism, and but a part of the Catholic doctrines which were preserved by the Genevan Reform-

er. In proof of this assertion, I can merely refer you to three or four sources of evidence. In the first place, go into society, and ask the members of orthodox congregations to explain their views of religion. I have done this in different places, and to some considerable extent; and I have found but a precious few, who adhered to the sentiments of Calvin, or to the particular form in which he advocated the unreformed doctrines of the Catholic church. In the second place, a graduate of your Seminary related to me the following anecdote in substance. Said he, "I was passing an evening with a very intelligent and highly educated lady of the orthodox church; she uttered some severe remarks concerning Arminian sentiments. I took occasion afterward to read to her the articles on Calvinism and Arminianism in Hannah Adams's Dictionary of Religions, without letting her know to which side they belonged. I asked which statement expressed most nearly her views of religion? She readily answered, — 'The one last read,' which was *Arminianism.* And if the same thing could be done in the same manner to all the members of our denomination, I have no doubt, that nine out of ten would make the same reply." Of the truth of this supposition I have not the least doubt; for my own experience and observation fully confirm the statement. In the third place, look at the frequent complaints of misrepresentations made by members of your party. Whenever a unitarian, either in the pulpit or from the press, has given the *Calvinistic* sentiments, the great mass of your professors have declared that they held no such opinions. But there is another more satisfactory source of evidence. I mean the publications of *some* of your church members and preachers. By comparing their real opinions with Calvinism, I can see no great resemblance; and for one, I firmly bevlieve that if Calvin was now alive in this country, and entertained the same opinions as before his death, and possessed the same disposition and power as when reigning at Geneva, he would very quickly serve even yourself, and no small portion of your denomination as he did Servetus, for your heresies or departures from the articles of his creed. I think every man who will examine this subject must come to the same conclusion. Why then will you attempt to make the less informed part of the community believe, that you still adhere to all the important sentiments of Calvin?

But perhaps you will say, that you have already publicly declared that "you do not receive *every thing* which Calvin taught, nor *any thing* because he taught it." Very well. This is a most important declaration. Now if you have the right of renouncing one Calvinistic doctrine, because it does not appear to your mind to coincide with the instructions of Scripture, have I not the same right? May I not, for the same reason, renounce every Calvinistic doctrine which appears to me unchristian? Surely. Why then do you condemn me for so doing? Why do you make such great exertions to prejudice the ignorant against unitarians, by assuring them that they have renounced

the great doctrines of the Reformation? Does not such a practice condemn yourself? Or are you commissioned to decide just how far a man may depart from Calvinism and remain innocent? If you have received any such authority, please to exhibit your credentials, for on this question your mere assertion is not satisfactory; and if you have no such infallibility, why not act consistently? Why not acknowledge, that I have the same right to depart ten steps from Calvinism, that you have to depart two! Why not admit, that I may as justly censure you, for lingering behind in the march of religious knowledge, as you may blame me, for marching at too rapid a pace? I must confess, that all this noise and blustering about the doctrines of the Reformation, appear to me perfectly ridiculous, to say nothing more severe. I am free to acknowledge, that the authority of the Reformers weighs exceeding little in my estimation. For who were those said Reformers? Mere fallible, prejudiced, sinful mortals; men who had been stuffed even to surfeiting with Catholic traditions, absurdities, and errors; men whose advantages for ascertaining the true meaning of the Gospel were far inferior to those of the present day; men who make no claims to perfection, infallibility, or inspiration. And must I regard such characters as lights of the world? Is it to be supposed, that men thus educated and situated could have burst at once from the midnight darkness of Popery to the meridian splendor of Christianity? No; such a supposition would be perfectly absurd. I am as ready as any one to acknowledge their true merits, and their just claims on our gratitude. They were great men for that unenlightened period; but were they now living, would you point to them as the doctors of theological science and knowledge? They were good men for those wicked days; but were they now exhibiting the same temper and conduct, would you hold them up as worthy examples of imitation in Christian holiness? They had many blemishes and sins in their religious characters; and were such now practised by any of your divines, would not their very standing in society be forfeited? I indeed honor their courage, their resolution, their perseverance, in breaking from the shackles of the mother church, and asserting the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment; but I censure their open violation of the fundamental principles of Protestantism. I respect their virtues and achievements in the cause of truth and religious liberty; but I pity their superstitions, their errors, their bigotry, and their cruelty. I have no desire to be baptized into the names of any of the number. And as to their writings, I am prepared to adhere to them just so far as they appear to me to adhere to the plain instructions of revelation, and no farther. I should as soon think of taking my views of Chemistry from the lucubrations of the old Alchemists, as my views of Christianity from the speculations of the old Reformers. In one word, I am ready to use their publications in precisely the same manner that John Calvin used the works of the old Christian Fathers. These are his words. "While

we make use of their writings, we always remember that all things are ours to serve us, not to have dominion over us; and that we are Christ's alone, and owe him universal obedience. He who neglects this distinction, will have nothing decided in religion; since those holy men were ignorant of many things, frequently at variance with each other, and sometimes even inconsistent with themselves."

What then must be our conclusion? Does not the evidence which I have produced fully establish the four following particulars? *First*, that there was very little harmony or agreement among the Reformers. *Secondly*, that unitarians adhere to their *principles* most firmly; while the orthodox violate them most palpably. *Thirdly*, that unitarians are justified in their departure from the *doctrines* of Calvin, since it has been occasioned by their adherence to the principles of Protestantism; while the orthodox have also renounced so many of the peculiarities of this Reformer, that he would not own them as true disciples. And *fourthly*, that the leaders of the orthodox party are guilty of great unfairness in keeping from the people a considerable part of the truth on these important topics. I must conclude that the above propositions are perfectly demonstrated.

II. Disagreement.

Many individuals in your denomination have attempted to make the unlearned part of the community believe these two statements. *First*, that the orthodox disagree only on the *non-essentials* of religion. And *secondly*, that they differ from the unitarians on the *essentials* of the Gospel. I perceive that you have endeavoured to confirm these impressions. One quotation will be sufficient for my purpose. Here are your words: "We are prone to ask a question which is not recent. 'How can two walk together, unless they are *agreed?*' We do not urge these words beyond what we think to be their plain and obvious import. We do not think that *small* differences of opinion about *non-essentials*, are intended to be included in them. We limit the agreement to things which in our view are *essential*. Such we do honestly believe to be the *difference* between *unitarians* and *ourselves*." Now is all this true? Are the orthodox really agreed in all the essentials of religion? Is the disagreement between them and the unitarians so vast, as to place an impassable gulph between the two denominations? I think not. I do honestly believe that you differ more among yourselves on those very doctrines, which you call essential, than you do with unitarians on the same subjects. But let facts decide.

1. *The Nature of God.* In relation to the *nature* of God, there are now *four* distinct systems prevailing among the orthodox. The *first* class profess this belief: "That in the Godhead are three *persons*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these *three* are *one* God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." This is the doctrine to which you are obliged to assent every five years. One of the distinguished advocates of this view has made this declaration: "That the Father,

the Son, and the Holy Ghost are as *really distinct persons*, as Peter, James, and John; and *each of which is God.* To say that there are three divine persons, and not *three distinct infinite minds*, is both *heresy and nonsense.*" I should call this a belief in three Gods. For if you aver, that the Father alone is a *perfect* Being, the Son alone is a *perfect* Being, and the Spirit alone is a *perfect* Being; then you believe in three perfect Beings; and if so, in three perfect Gods; for God can be nothing more nor less than one perfect Being.

A *second* class profess this belief: "That God exists in *three distinct persons*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in nature and *equal* in every perfection." A distinguished advocate of this view assures us, "that the *Father alone is not God.*" And another defender of this form of the doctrine makes this declaration: "That the Father, Son, and Spirit are *three proper distinct persons*, entirely equal to, and independent upon each other, yet *making up* one and the same Being." I should call this a belief in no God. For if the *Father alone* is not a *perfect* Being, the Son alone is not a perfect Being, the Spirit alone is not a perfect Being; then you believe in three imperfect Beings; and if so, you believe in no God; for three imperfect Beings can never *make up* one perfect Being.

A *third* class profess this belief: "That the Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is *of the Father alone;* not made, nor created, but *begotten.* The Holy Spirit *is of the Father, and of the Son;* neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding.*" I should call this a belief in that form of unitarianism sometimes termed *high Arianism.* For if the Son was *begotten* by the Father, then the Father must have existed before he begat the Son; and consequently, the Son cannot be *self-existent;* but must have been dependent for his existence on a self-existent Father. And if the Spirit proceeded from both Father and Son, then he could not have had so early a beginning as the begotten Son; and consequently must be subordinate to both.

A *fourth* class profess this belief: "That there is one Infinite, Eternal Mind, and *three somethings* that are *not distinct minds.*" So far as I am able to understand your explanations of the doctrine, I think this is the particular form you advocate, notwithstanding your quinquennial vows to the contrary. I should call this a belief in the simplest form of unitarianism, sometimes termed *humanitarianism.* For if your *somethings* or *distinctions* are not distinct minds, they are mere unmeaning names. And those who adhere to this view of the subject, impose upon themselves by using words without any definite ideas; and then endeavour to make others believe that they are sound in the orthodox faith.

Such are the various and contradictory systems of the trinity now in vogue among the members of your denomination. I suppose you will aver, that so long as all the classes will agree to use the word *trinity*, all this disagreement in *ideas* is non-essential.

2. *The Nature of the Son of God.* In relation to the *nature* of the Son of God, there are now five distinct systems prevailing among the orthodox. One class profess this belief. "That the Son of God had no existence until conceived by the Virgin Mary." This is your view. To establish this point you wrote a volume of Letters to your friend Dr. Miller. He regarded your form of the doctrine as approaching to unitarianism. For in his answer to your publication, you find these explicit declarations: "A number of your arguments; the strain of your principal objections; and the license which you indulge, in many cases, in the interpretation of Scripture, — *all savour so much of a school* with which I should abhor the thought of associating your respected name, that I read them with *not a little pain.* Yes, my dear Sir, though I know you abhor the sentiments of that school from your heart; yet, *if your name were removed from the title-page;* and if the several passages in which you profess your firm belief in the divinity of Christ, were expunged from the pamphlet, *I should really suspect that it had come from some member of the unitarian ranks,* rather than from the midst of the orthodox camp." Now the Doctor is mistaken in calling your belief on this subject unitarian; he should have pronounced it real Socinianism. For Socinus held the same view of the Son of God, and still contended that he should be worshipped. And I believe you would have all men honor the Son even as they honor the Father. For I recollect hearing one of your party utter these sentiments in solemn prayer about the time of your controversy: "O thou who hast ascended to thy God and our God, we beseech thee by thy wearisome labors, by thy bloody sweat, and by thy agonizing cross, to hear and answer our prayers." So long as reason remains, I shall never forget the shock produced on my feelings, by this prayer to a human deity. I must therefore call this *a belief in Socinianism.* I do hope you will advance one step further, and take your stand on the more rational and Scriptural ground of unitarianism.

A *second* class profess the same belief, that you assure us the Christian Fathers did, for the three first centuries of the Christian era. As you have investigated this subject very thoroughly, I will give the result of your labors in your own words. Here it is. "I begin then by giving the result of my investigations respecting the three first centuries. It is this, *viz.;* that *the great body of the early and influential Christian Fathers,* whose works are extant, *believed that the Son of God was begotten at a period not long before the creation of the world.*" Among the unlearned members of your churches, you will find not a few who adhere to this opinion. I must call this *low Arianism,* or the most prevalent form of unitarianism in this country.

A *third* class profess this belief: "That the Son of God was begotten by the Father from all eternity." To establish this position, your friend Dr. Miller addressed a volume of Letters to yourself. I find your opinion of his doctrine in the following observations. "I am

unable to conceive of a definite meaning in the terms *eternal generation*; and I cannot regard them in any other light than as a *palpable contradiction of language*." This remark gave the Doctor so much offence, that he makes this assertion concerning it: "I will venture to assert that it is as *unphilosophical* as it is *impious*." I believe you and other New England divines regard this doctrine of your southern brethren and of our Pilgrim fathers, as wholly subversive of the real divinity of the Son. For in a volume of discourses by the late Dr. Parish, I find these assertions: "The notion of an *eternal generation* is not merely a *mystery*, but an *impossibility*. It is a violent solecism in language to call any being the son of another, who is of the same and equal origin. *This*, therefore, *infallibly destroys the real divinity of the Son*." I should call this belief *high Arianism*, or one form of unitarianism. I think you entertain the same opinion; for in your answer to Dr. Miller I find these observations: "I must confess, that with the views which I now entertain, if I could be persuaded that the doctrine of eternal *emanation* or *generation* is true, I should feel that the *first step was taken towards embracing the Arian system*. I cannot help feeling that the idea of a *derived* God is, in reality, a vastly greater approximation to Arianism, than that which we adopt; and that the antagonists of Arius had much less reason to dispute with him than they apprehended." You are right in this opinion. There is certainly as little difference between the Doctor's system and the Arian scheme, as can possibly be imagined.

A *fourth* class profess this belief: "That the Son of God is equal to God himself." One quotation from a discourse published the present year will confirm my statement. These are the words of the reverend divine: "As a *son*, he possesses perfectly the same nature with the Father, is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person; is without beginning, eternal, uncreated, and almighty, omniscient, and every where present; in truth, possesses all divine perfections equally with the Father, is equally with him the object of divine worship; and must be honored even as the Father. And if any error can destroy the souls of men, it must be that which denies the *son's* equality with the Father." I should call this a *belief in a second God*, which is an absurdity.

A *fifth* class profess this belief: "That the Son of God is God himself." In proof of this assertion, I will give you one extract from a sermon published the present year, by a distinguished divine in Ohio, and circulated widely as a tract in the Western country. Here it is. "*That Babe that lies in a manger at Bethlehem is the mighty God! That man of poverty who travels through Judea preaching peace to the lost, is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! The man who is pressed with sorrow and covered with bloody sweat in Gethsemane, is the Lord of Hosts! He who wears the crown of thorns, and endures the cruel scourge, and receives the sentence of death at Pilate's bar, is he*

who distributes crowns of life! That mangled victim which languishes on the cross, is God over all blessed for ever! And that blood which issues from his opening wounds is the blood of God!" This is explicit. What to call this belief, I know not. I cannot describe it by any *Christian* name. Such are the various and contradictory systems now in vogue among your denomination. I suppose you will aver, that so long as all classes will agree to use the words *divinity of Christ*, all this disagreement in *ideas* is non-essential.

3. *Atonement.* In relation to the doctrine of the atonement, there are now five prevailing systems among the orthodox. The *first* class profess to believe in the doctrine of *exhibition*, so called. This view of the subject originated, I believe, with the Rev. Dr. Murdock, your former colleague. He furnishes us with a definition of his scheme in the following sentence: "The atonement, to be a proper substitute for the execution of the law, ought to be a *public exhibition;* and such an exhibition as would impress all the creatures of God with a deep and awful sense of the majesty and sanctity of his law, of the criminality of disobedience to it; and of the holy, unbending rectitude of God as a moral governor; and such the atonement really was." When this theory was delivered in the chapel of your Seminary, most of your pupils regarded it a vast improvement upon the cold, chilling doctrine of Calvinism. They accordingly requested a copy of the discourse for publication. Soon after its appearance, some of your leaders thought it contained heretical notions, and would injure the reputation of your institution. An effort was therefore made to crush its popularity and influence, by requesting a gentleman at some distance to review and condemn the pamphlet.

A *second* class profess to believe in the doctrine of *substitution*, so called. This view was advocated by Luther. Let him then give us an explanation of this theory. Here are his words. "Christ sustained the person of a sinner; not of one, but of all sinners; and whosesoever sins, I, thou, we, all have done, or shall do hereafter, are Christ's own sins as verily as if he had done them." He further declares, "that Jesus Christ was the greatest trangressor, murderer, rebel, and blasphemer, that could be in all the world." Soon after the publication of Dr. Murdock's sermon on the atonement, you came forward with some discourses on the same subject. It was thought expedient to do something to counteract the growing success of his new views, and accordingly a boarder in your family obtained some half a dozen names to request the publication of your theory. Your matter was compressed, and made its appearance in the form of two discourses. You undertake to defend Luther's doctrine of substitution. One quotation from the pamphlet will be sufficient for my present purpose. These are your words. "Since he did not suffer on account of any guilt of his own, on what ground can they reconcile his sufferings with the justice of

God, who hold that he is not a *substitute* for sinners?" Although you advocate an entirely different view from the one just published by your colleague, it is a little remarkable that you do not even allude to his recent production, in your pamphlet *published by the request of the students*.

A *third* class profess to believe in the doctrine of *satisfaction*, so called. This view was maintained by Calvin. I will therefore look to him and his followers for an explanation of the subject. "The burden of damnation, from which we were delivered, was laid upon Christ. It was requisite, that he should feel the severity of the divine vengeance, in order to appease the wrath of God. There is no other satisfaction by which God, being displeased, may be made favorable and appeased." The pious Calvinistic Flavel makes these declarations: "God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it. The design and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate compensation or satisfaction for the sins of his elect. To wrath, to the wrath of an infinite God without mixture, to the very torments of hell, was Christ delivered, and that by the hand of his own Father." Soon after your discourses on the atonement were well before the public, the Rev. Dr. Dana, of Newburyport, was called upon to deliver an ordination sermon. He took occasion to mention his dissatisfaction with both the theories which had been advocated at your Seminary, and to defend the old Calvinistic notion of satisfaction. The leaders of your party soon perceived, that unless something was speedily done to keep the orthodox community quiet, there would be an open theological war among yourselves. An individual then in Andover was therefore induced to write a review of the three productions for the New Haven Spectator. He endeavoured to make the credulous people believe, that there was no *essential* disagreement between the several writers; and that the apparent difference of opinion on this important doctrine was more in words and phraseology, than in ideas. But all this deception was displeasing to Dr. Dana. He accordingly addressed a communication to the directors of the Spectator, and requested its insertion in a forthcoming number. This request being denied, he went on himself, but was unsuccessful in obtaining satisfaction. Since that period, great caution has been observed to prevent the unlearned from suspecting the extent of the disagreement.

A *fourth* class profess to believe in the doctrine of *infinite* atonement, so called. They pretend, that sin is an infinite evil; and consequently an infinite substitute must suffer to cancel the debt. They therefore declare that the *divine* nature of the Saviour, that God the Son, actually suffered and died for the sins of men. But would they remember, that God cannot suffer; would they recollect, that if God the Son could so suffer as to satisfy the justice of the Father, still there must be some other God to suffer in order to satisfy the justice of God the Son and

God the Holy Ghost, who were also equally offended with the sinfulness of men, I think they would say nothing further about an *infinite* atonement.

A *fifth* class profess to believe, that nothing but the human nature of the Son suffered. If so, this leaves no atonement at all. For the sufferings of the mere man Jesus could have no more efficacy, than the sufferings of the mere man Stephen. The thinking portion of your denomination are getting upon this ground as fast as possible. This is evidently giving up the whole doctrine, although you may continue to abuse unitarians for the same belief. There are others of your party, who know not what to believe on this subject. About the time your publication on the atonement appeared, one of your pupils presented himself to an association of ministers for examination, in order to obtain a license to preach. One of the Reverend gentlemen asked him three several times to state his views on the atonement. He evaded the question each time. Afterwards he came to the questioner and apologized for his apparent rudeness. Said he, "It does not do for us young men to give our opinion on those subjects, upon which the Faculty have not yet come to an agreement." Whether your Faculty have yet come to an agreement on this doctrine, or not, I am unable to determine. I presume, however, the dismission of one of your Professors may have contributed to restore this harmony. If I have departed from the literal truth in any of the statements under this division, the blame must rest on two orthodox ministers, who were members of your institution at the time mentioned. In view of these facts, how could you quote and treat the extract from Dr. Channing as you have done? Did you wish to awaken the prejudices of the ignorant against him? Did you not know, that on this very point you were peculiarly vulnerable? And especially, did you not recollect, that a publication on the doctrine of the atonement, by the Rev. Noah Worcester, D. D., had been before the public more than a year; that it had shaken the faith of some of your most devoted friends; that it had received no notice from orthodox writers; and that it is regarded as a complete refutation of your views of the subject, and altogether unanswerable? Such then are the various and contradictory systems of the orthodox on the subject of the atonement. I suppose you will aver, that so long as all classes will agree to use the word *atonement*, their disagreement in *ideas* is non-essential.

4. *Agreement in Affection.* I intended to notice most of the orthodox doctrines in a similar manner, and have made most of the necessary selections from your writers for this purpose. But I find my limits will not permit this. I therefore simply assert, that the disagreement among your leaders is equally great and striking on the subjects of regeneration, original sin, imputation, irresistible grace, election and reprobation, salvation and punishment, the inspiration of the Scriptures,

and revivals of religion. The literal fact seems to be this. In religious truth, Andover is fifty years in advance of Bangor and Princeton; New Haven and New York are twenty-five years in advance of Andover; Cambridge is fifty years in advance of New Haven; although one of your students, who still retains his orthodoxy, assured me that he had no doubt, fifty years would find Andover on precisely the same standing that Cambridge now is, so far as the pupils were concerned.

Now are the leaders of the orthodox party heartily united in *affection*? You are divided into various parties, and distinguished by several sectarian names. There are the old, the new, the moderate, and the rigid Calvinists. There are the Hopkinsians, the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists; and still you wish all to be included in the orthodox denomination. There are among you great envyings, and jealousies, and enmities. Go among the adherents of Bangor and Princeton Theological Seminaries, and you hear the most severe denunciations against Andover and New Haven. I speak from personal acquaintance with this subject. Go among the adherents of Andover; and you hear the New Haven and New York divines severely censured. One of your ministers was asked by a unitarian, what he thought of the New Haven Professors? He returned the following answer: "We *think they are perverting the Scriptures much worse than the unitarians.*" And what does the New Haven Spectator say of your friend, Dr. Woods, on account of his late Letters to Dr. Taylor? I will select a few passages. The reviewer declares, that "Dr. Woods's Letters abound in remarks, which are not only *irrelevant* to the point at issue, but *personal* and *invidious* in a high degree;" that "he has held out to view two opposing parties, Dr. Taylor and his friends on one side, and the orthodox on the other;" that "not content with calling in question the orthodoxy of Dr. Taylor, he has actually held him forth as identified, no one knows to what extent, with the *unitarian party;* and addresses the man, whom he has thus arraigned before the churches, as an *affectionate brother*, and a respected and *beloved* brother;" that "he has, without the shadow of a reason, struck a direct blow at every thing *that is valuable in the character of* Dr. Taylor, as a man, a minister of the gospel, and an instructer of youth;" that "he has extended the same system of attack, by surmise and insinuation, to the whole body of Dr. Taylor's pupils, and to all, who may agree with him in his theological opinions;" that "he prefers a direct charge against Dr. Taylor and his friends, that their sentiments are *likely* to result in the utter abandonment of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and at last in *infidelity;*" that "the personal incivility which pervades these Letters is without a *parallel in our churches during the last thirty years.*" And notwithstanding all this, Dr. Beecher could make the observation, to be taken and circulated by the smaller men of the party, that there was little or no disagreement between Andover and New Haven; but that the *friendly discussion* related to the *philosophy* of religion.

And what have the leading Calvinists said of you, Hopkinsians? Take a few extracts which have been published by Dr. Ely of Philadelphia. The Doctor himself observes, when speaking of some Calvinistic creeds, "The *Hopkinsians*, Sabellians, Arians, and Socinians cannot be expected to like them. Any person who maintains *either of these heresies* has departed from the faith of the *pious fathers of New England*." The Rev. Dr. Smith, of Princeton, observes, when speaking of some extracts from Hopkinsian writers; That this "assortment of the religious *errors* and *absurdities* of certain writers in our country, who have gained a reputation, far beyond what *nonsense* and *impiety* should acquire for a *divine*. And I am persuaded, that these profound divines are preparing the way for a more *extensive diffusion of infidel principles, and even of atheism in our country*." The Rev. Mr. M'Niece, of New York, declares, that Hopkinsian sentiments are at war with the philosophy of the human mind, with *common sense*, and with the *word of the living God*." The Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, declares that Hopkinsianism is "indeed *another gospel* in some very material points." But there is no end to the quotations I could make to show the real divisions and dissentions which now exist among the leaders of the orthodox. Sir, I must speak with plainness. All this pretended union and harmony among your leaders is a deception. You agree heartily in but three particulars. First, in using certain *words*, while you attach to them very different *ideas*. Secondly, in making a human creed instead of the Bible your standard of religious truth. And, thirdly, in denouncing and condemning those who will not yield to your dictation. In truth, there is any thing but agreement among you in *sentiment*, and, judging from your writings, but little in *affection*. I will conclude this head with merely one extract from a letter lately written by an *orthodox* divine of eminence, moderation, and candor. I hope he will not be offended with this liberty, for his remarks seem too important to be withheld from the public. Speaking of yourself, and of the impression received on reading your Letter, he thus observes:

"His *theory* of religious liberty appeared to me sound and good. But I was surprised, that he should maintain boldly, that the conduct of the orthodox is in full accordance with that theory. For I had known something of *his own* sufferings from the illiberality of both the South and the North. I knew the long-standing, yet unjust suspicions of *his* orthodoxy, which have seemed to give him much disquietude; and which perhaps have induced him to stand forth, from time to time, as the bold champion of the orthodox, and to lash the unitarians, especially, with all his might. I recollected his controversy with Dr. Miller on the sonship of Christ, and with Dr. Carnahan respecting the American Education Society; in both of which, I supposed, Mr. Stuart would feel there was some want of liberality and Christian charity in his adver-

saries. The latter, especially, is full proof of the want of harmony and mutual confidence between the North and South. I called to mind the late commotions among the orthodox, respecting the doctrine of the atonement, and the singular part Mr. Stuart himself acted in that dispute. I looked at the existing civil war, respecting the New Haven theology; and the book which Dr. Woods was writing against Dr. Taylor, at the very time Mr. Stuart was publishing his Letter, and in which Dr. Woods is thought to have manifested an unchristian and ungentlemanly spirit. Of that book, and of the whole history of the controversy, Mr. Stuart could hardly be ignorant, as he is known to be claimed by both parties, though he probably has not the full confidence of either. I also recollected the *many* orthodox and useful ministers, who have felt themselves injured by the illiberal surmises and the secret machinations of certain leading men. These and other topics suggested to my mind numerous facts, which I supposed should have led any man, who was as well acquainted with them as Mr. Stuart, to beware of the broad and unqualified assertions contained in his book."

III. Principles and Doctrines of the Pilgrims.

Many individuals of your denomination have endeavoured to make the unlearned part of the community believe the three following statements respecting our Pilgrim fathers. *First*, that the orthodox observe the same governing *principles*. *Secondly*, that they believe the same religious *doctrines*. And, *thirdly*, that unitarians have renounced both their principles and doctrines, and are laboring for their destruction. I perceive, much to my astonishment, that you have advanced the same sentiments. Three quotations from your letter will prove the truth of this assertion. My first will relate to the *principles* of the Pilgrims. Here it is. "The orthodox are not to be diverted from their purpose, by language of severe reproach and unmeasured indignation. The sons of those, who left country and kindred to brave the storms of the ocean in frail barks, to face the gloomy horrors of the wintry blasts and storms, in a savage land and in a boundless forest, and who did all this cheerfully that they might hold fast the orthodox faith, and worship God according to it — the sons of such men, *holding to the same principles*, and believing them to be the only foundation of their eternal hopes — are not to be diverted from their course by obloquy and denunciation, however eloquent and severe." You here assert that the orthodox hold the *principles* of the Pilgrim fathers. My next passage will relate to their opinions or religious doctrines. Here it is. "The orthodox do not understand why they have not the liberty of defending the *opinions which their ancestors held*, in case they do sincerely accord with them. That they do *sincerely agree*, they openly profess and avow; and neither yourself, nor any man on earth, has a right to call this in question." I, Sir, am the man who will call this agreement in question before I finish this topic. My last quotation will relate to the conduct of unitarians in la-

boring to destroy the principles and doctrines of the Pilgrims. "The orthodox have as good a right to *maintain* the *doctrines* of the Pilgrims as *unitarians* have to *assail* them." Now are these three propositions true? I think not. And I believe the statements I shall now make will prove at least four particulars.

1. *Principles of the Pilgrims.* Who were the Pilgrim fathers? Those surely, who landed on Plymouth rock in 1620. And those certainly, who afterwards commenced settlements at Salem, and Charlestown, and Boston. This answer is sufficiently explicit for my present purpose. And by what grand *principles* did they profess to be governed in their religious and ecclesiastical concerns? Four of the most important I will now describe. What then was the *first* great fundamental principle of the Pilgrim fathers? "THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE REFORMATION." They earnestly desired to obtain more truth from the sacred Scriptures. You will demand proof of this assertion. I give it you in the words of the venerable John Robinson. You well know that he was the pastor of those, who came to Plymouth in the first vessel. You also know that he gave them an affecting farewell address when parting from their friend and minister. You likewise know that this Christian speech contains the fundamental principles of action by which the first emigrants were governed. Here you have the words of this eloquent discourse, which manifests the *true spirit of the Pilgrims.*

"Brethren, we are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your face on earth any more, the God of heaven only knows; but whether the Lord has appointed that or no, I *charge* you before God and his blessed angels, *that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow Jesus Christ.* If God reveal any thing to you, by *any other instrument of his*, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; *for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word.* For my part I *cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation.* The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw. Whatever part of his will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a great misery much to be lamented; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. *I beseech you, remember, it is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God.* Remember *that*, and every other article of your covenant. But I must herewithal exhort you to take heed what you receive as

truth; examine it; consider it, and compare it with other Scriptures of truth, before you receive it; *for it is not possible the Christian world come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.*"

Now what are the leading sentiments of this farewell address of the Father of the Pilgrims? Two things are greatly to be lamented; that the Calvinistic church in the old world had come to a period in religion, and that Calvinists would proceed no farther in the path of truth than their Genevan master led the way. Two things are stated as undeniable facts; that the Reformers could not have discovered all truth, and that much more remained to break forth from God's word. Three duties are solemnly enjoined; that the Pilgrims were not to follow any human authority, any farther than it coincided with the teachings of Christ Jesus; that the Scriptures were to be their only standard of religious faith; and that they were to receive information from whatever source it might be offered. And why were these statements made in the last, sad, solemn, afflicting moment of separation? Simply to remind the departing, *that the advancement of the Reformation was the primary object of their pilgrimage.* And which denomination adheres most firmly to this great essential principle of the first Pilgrim fathers? Let facts decide.

Does the orthodox denomination endeavour to promote the advancement of the Reformation? No; look into the constitution of your theological seminary. You there learn, that it was the *intention* of the founders to endow an institution for the support and dissemination of principle s*strictly Calvinistic*, as they are contained in the *Assembly's Catechism.* You will recollect that this catechism was framed some twenty years after the settlement of the old colony. Had those wrangling divines obtained all the light that was to break forth from God's holy word? Look also at your solemn obligations. You will remember that you are bound never to alter the least expression of a human creed, which professes to be founded on this said Catechism. Does this look like being at liberty to embrace new truths? Look also at your churches. You have fettered them down in the same manner; and those who will not make this creed of the dark ages their standard of religious truth must be excluded from your communion. Look likewise at your denunciations of unitarians, because they follow the Scriptures instead of Calvin and the Pilgrims. In short, look at the various measures of your leaders, for binding down the present generation to the Calvinistic articles of the Assembly's Catechism; and your manifold instruments of persecution, for all who will not acknowledge your infallibility. Every child must perceive, that your denomination violates this fundamental principle of our Pilgrim fathers, openly, palpably, and systematically; and that all your exertions are directed to *prevent* the advancement of the reformation.

Does the unitarian denomination endeavour to promote the advancement of the reformation? Surely so. Is it not for this very purpose, that they banish all human creeds from their churches and theological seminaries? Is it not for this very purpose, that they urge all classes to search the Scriptures with earnestness and honesty and boldness? Is it not for this very purpose, that they grant the Christian name and rights and privileges to all who make the Bible the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice? Is it not for this very purpose, that they reprint the best edition of the original records of our faith, and encourage new translations of the sacred writings? Is it not for this very purpose, that they regard no human authority, either living or dead, as of any value farther than it coincides with the instructions of the divine standard? Is it not for this very purpose, that they encounter the obloquy and reproaches and persecutions of the orthodox denomination? Could they adopt any measures more effectual for accomplishing this important purpose? No; you will certainly admit, that the unitaran denomination adhere most scrupuously to this fundamental principle of the Pilgrim fathers; and that all their exertions are directed to the advancement of the reformation.

And what was the *second* grand principle of the Pilgrim fathers? "OPEN COMMUNION." A good authority thus observes. "While they take care, according to apostolic injunction, that all things be done decently and in order, it *is their duty not to impose any thing, by way of subscription or declaration of faith, upon those who desire admission to the ordinances, which may not be conscienciously complied with by sincere Christians of all denominations.*" Your friend, Dr. Hawes, has also declared that the Pilgrims "*acted on the principle of open communion; making evidence of Christian character the* ONLY *condition of fellowship!*" I thank the gentleman for what little truth his *tribute* contains. I suppose this evidence is sufficient; but I choose to advance more. I will give you a specimen of covenants adopted by our Pilgrim fathers, to convince you, that they did not hedge up the entrance to the Lord's table with doctrinal tests and human standards of divine truth; but that they opened the door to all sincere Christians of every denomination. The church first planted in Plymouth was organized before they reached our shores. The covenant they then adopted has not been preserved. But about fifty years after their landing, a public fast was held, and they renewed their covenant engagements. The records of the church thus read. "A church covenant was read; and the church voted that it should be left on record *as that which they did own to be the substance of that covenant, which their fathers entered into at the first gathering of the church;* which was in the words following.

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy ordinances, we being by the most wise and good providence of God brought together in this place, and desirous to unite ourselves into

one *congregation or church*, under the Lord Jesus Christ our Head, that we may be in such root as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed and sanctified to himself, we do hereby solemnly and religiously, as in his most holy presence, avouch the Lord Jehovah, the only true God, to be our God and the God of ours; and do promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love to, and watchfulness over one another, depending wholly and only upon the Lord our God to enable us by his grace hereunto."

The first congregational church organized in this country was at Salem, and that must be regarded as the parent of all the independent churches of New England. I will therefore give you the covenant adopted by that body at its formation.

"We covenant with our Lord, and one with another; and we do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth; and do explicitly, in the name and fear of God, profess and protest to walk as followeth, through the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We avouch the Lord to be our God, and ourselves to be his people, in the truth and simplicity of our spirits. We give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of his grace, for the teaching, ruling, and sanctifying of us in matters of worship and conversation, resolving to cleave unto him alone for life and glory, and to reject all contrary ways, canons, and constitutions of men in his worship. We promise to walk with our brethren, with all watchfulness and tenderness, avoiding jealousies and suspicions, back-biting, censurings, provokings, secret rising of spirit against them; but in all offences to follow the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bear and forbear, give and forgive, as he hath taught us. In public or private, we will willingly do nothing to the offence of the church; but will be willing to take advice for ourselves and ours, as occasion shall be presented. We will not in the congregation be forward either to show our own gifts and parts in speaking or scrupling, or there discover the weakness or failings of our brethren; but attend an orderly call thereunto, knowing how much the Lord may be dishonored, and his gospel, and the profession of it, slighted by our distempers and weaknesses in public. We bind ourselves to study the advancement of the gospel in all truth and peace; both in regard to those that are within and without, no way slighting our sister churches, but using their counsel, as need shall be; not laying a stumbling-block before any, no, not the Indians, whose good we desire to promote; and so to converse, as we may avoid the very appearance of evil. We do hereby promise to carry ourselves in all lawful obedience to those that are over us, in church or commonwealth, knowing how well pleasing it will be to the Lord, that they should have encouragement in their places, by our not grieving their

spirits through our irregularities. We resolve to approve ourselves to the Lord in our particular callings ; shunning idleness, as the bane of any state ; nor will we deal hardly or oppressingly with any, wherein we are the Lord's stewards. Promising also unto our best ability to teach our children and servants the knowledge of God, and of his will, that they may serve him also ; and all this not by any strength of our own, but by the Lord Christ ; whose blood we desire may sprinkle this our covenant made in his name."

Take next the covenant adopted at the formation of the first chuch in Boston.

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy will and divine ordinance, we, whose names are here underwritten, being by his most wise and good providence brought together into this part of America, in the bay of Massachusetts, and desirous to unite into *one congregation or church*, under the Lord Jesus Christ, our head, in such sort as becometh all those, whom he hath redeemed and sanctified to himself, do hereby solemnly and religiously, as in his most holy presence, promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect to each other so near, as God shall give us grace."

My limits will not permit me to introduce any more of the covenants of our Pilgrim fathers. Now you will notice several remarkable circumstances connected with these creeds. *First*, you do not find one peculiarity of orthodoxy in any of them ; nothing but what every unitarian can heartily subscribe. And this must convince you, that they wished to exclude no believer of good morals from their communion. *Secondly*, you observe, that our fathers used the words *congregation* and *church* as synonymous ; as meaning one and the same body. You *finally* remark, how much more anxious these Christians were to bind themselves to a faithful discharge of Christian duty, than to fetter their minds with a doctrinal test, or set up a human standard of truth. And all this for what purpose ? To promote *open communion*. Now which denomination adheres most firmly to this principle of our Pilgrim fathers ?

Does the orthodox denomination practice upon this principle of open communion ? No ; instead of these simple and Scriptural covenants, which you dare not introduce into your religious bodies ; you have framed long, doctrinal, metaphysical creeds ; and you have raised them up before the Christian ordinances, so that all who will not bow down to your idols, must be excluded from the Lord's table. You have not made evidence of Christian character your only condition of fellowship ; for one of your Connecticut ministers declared, "that he could no more commune with him who denied the supreme *deity* of Jesus Christ, than with a Pagan or Musselman." Not only so. Your invita-

tions at the time of communion are thoroughly exclusive. Two forms I have known used. One is this. "Members of sister churches *in fellowship with this church*, are invited to commune with us." The other is this. "All members of other churches who believe that Jesus Christ is the Almighty God, are invited to commemorate his sufferings and death." But this is not all. Your ministers have stood before the Lord's table, and declared that the ordinance was instituted to commemorate the divinity of Christ; and that all who did not believe him to be God, could not partake worthily. They have done this, when they knew that some of the most intelligent Christians present were unitarians, and thus have designedly driven them from the feast of love. All these circumstances and many more of a similar character fully prove, that the orthodox denomination violate this second grand principle of the Pilgrims, openly, palpably, and systematically; and that all possible exertions are used to prevent any from coming to the Lord's table, unless they will assent to the articles of a human standard.

And does the unitarian denomination observe this principle of the Pilgrim fathers? Yes; they have no human doctrinal creeds to keep conscientious believers from their communion. Since so many of the churches of the fathers have fallen into their hands, they have been raking up their first covenants, and restoring them to their proper and former standing. When unitarian ministers give out their invitation to strangers, it is frequently in this form. "Members of the Christian church, of whatever name or denomination, are cordially invited to partake with us at the table of our common Lord." When assembled at the feast of our Lord, we dare not drive from his table any guests who have thought proper to comply with his invitation. In short, we make evidence of Christian character our only condition of fellowship. And, so long as a believer takes the Bible for his guide of faith and practice, and exhibits a Christian character, he is cordially welcomed to our celebration of the ordinances. In this way, we adhere most firmly to this principle of our Pilgrim fathers; and take special care, "not to impose any thing, by way of subscription or declaration of faith, upon those who desire admission to the ordinances, which may not be conscientiously complied with by sincere Christians of all denominations."

And what was the *third* grand fundamental principle of our Pilgrim fathers? "THE PERFECT INDEPENDENCE OF EVERY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH." This right they guarded with extreme jealousy. When the first pastor was ordained in Salem, a deputation arrived from the first church in Plymouth. They were allowed to take no part in the services, except to give the right hand of fellowship. And before the person could do this, he was obliged to declare, "that no inference should ever be drawn from it in support of the idea, that there was the least dependence whatever in this church upon others, or the least jurisdiction over it in any external body, or the least necessary con-

nexion between this and other churches wherever it might be." So in the first church in Woburn. They were about to ordain a pastor. Delegates from other churches were present; but fearing they might claim some jurisdiction over them, they were not allowed to take any part in the exercises. They preferred doing the whole themselves, though the services should not be so well performed. You thus perceive what the pilgrims understood by the *independence of the churches.* Now, which denomination has adhered most closely to this sacred principle of our ancestors?

Does the orthodox denomination scrupulously guard the independence of the churches? No; look at the consociations in Connecticut. They destroy this principle as effectually as presbyterianism or episcopalianism. Not a church has the least independence left. All have virtually abandoned the congregational order. Look next at the various attempts to introduce the same system of slavery into the churches of this Commonwealth. And even at this moment, *your conferences of churches* virtually destroy the independence of particular churches. The pilgrims would no more have allowed such a combination, than they would have yielded to the Pope of Rome. And, lastly, your measures to prevent ministerial intercourse with unitarians are utterly subversive of the rights of individual pastors and churches. So that every one must readily perceive, that the leaders of your party openly, palpably, and systematically, violate this third fundamental principle of the Pilgrims; and use all their influence to bring the congregational churches into spiritual subjection.

And does the unitarian denominatian observe this dearly cherished principle of the fathers? Yes; can you produce an instance in which they have infringed the independency of any church? Have they not uniformly opposed the attempts of the orthodox to introduce the enslaving system of consociations? Is not each church in their order perfectly independent, having no connexion whatever with any other body, transacting all its own concerns in its own way? This you must admit. And, consequently, every one will grant that the unitarians have sacredly observed the third Principle of the pilgrims, and ever done all in their power to prevent the orthodox churches from falling into servitude.

And what was the *fourth* principle of the Pilgrims. "THE PERFECT EQUALITY OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES." Each church was literally independent of all others. Still all were acknowledged to be on an equal standing. Each one respected the sacred rights of all the others. Each one endeavoured to do unto others as it would have the others do unto itself. When members removed from one town to another, they were cheerfully dismissed and cordially recommended to the fellowship of the churches in the place of their new residence. In this way the perfect equality of congregational churches was pre-

served. Now which denomination adheres most rigidly to this principle of our Pilgrim fathers?

Does the orthodox denomination sacredly guard the equality of congregational churches? No; leaders of your party have visited the church members of their ministerial brethren, endeavoured to prejudice them against their present pastor, urged them to recede from his communion and form themselves into a new church. When members from your churches have removed into other towns, and requested a dismission, and a recommendation to the congregational church in the place of their residence, their request has been absolutely refused; and they have been assured that their former brethren would regard such a transfer of their relations as manifestly unsafe and sinful. In short, look at all the cases I have recorded, and tell me, if you can reconcile such proceedings with a rigid maintenance of the equality of the churches? No; every person must perceive that the fourth fundamental principle of our pilgrim fathers is openly, palpably, and systematically violated by the orthodox denomination; and that your leaders are exerting all their influence to destroy the equality of congregational churches.

Does the unitarian denomination observe this sacred principle of the fathers? Yes; they have regarded the parishes of their ministerial brethren as sacred ground. They have urged unitarian minorities in such societies to keep quiet, to pay their ministerial taxes, to attend the orthodox preaching, and to submit peaceably to orthodox usurpations of their rights. They have lent their aid to new societies when regularly organized; but have discouraged the formation of unitarian churches where the orthodox ministers would exchange with unitarians. And when church members have removed into orthodox parishes, they have cheerfully given them a dismission, and a recommendation. So that no one will pretend that unitarians have disregarded the equality of the churches; but all will admit that they have observed the fourth fundamental principle of the Pilgrims. These, Sir, are the leading and important principles of our Pilgrim fathers; and I know of no way in which you could have violated them more thoroughly, or in which the unitarians could have observed them more sacredly.

2. *Doctrines of the Pilgrims.* What were the religious doctrines of the Pilgrim fathers? The *Calvinistic* articles of belief. This I do not dispute. But does the orthodox denomination agree with the fathers in their doctrinal sentiments? I think not. And I will give the reasons for this opinion. Soon after the settlement of our country, the great assembly of divines at Westminster drew up a Confession of Faith and two Catechisms. The opinions of Calvin, as received by his followers of that period, were embodied in these formularies. To these statements our Pilgrim fathers of that day assented, and pronounced these articles the best human expression of their orthodox

faith. Now can you aver, that your denomination in New England believes the *Westminster Confession of Faith?* I will quote a few passages, which I believe most of you concur in rejecting.

And, *first*, take the doctrine of God and Christ. Here it is. "In the unity of the Godhead there be three *persons*, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; *the Son is eternally begotten of the Father*; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." Now I need not ask if you can assent to all the statements of this article. I know you cannot. For in the first place, you do not believe in three *persons* in the Godhead. This you have declared in your first Letters to Dr. Channing. You hold merely to three *distinctions*. In the *second* place, you do not believe the *Son was eternally begotten* of the Father. For so you have proclaimed in your Letters to Dr. Miller. In fact, this book was written for the express purpose of proving that this doctrine was neither Scriptural, rational, nor received by the early Christian fathers. And you must know that an avowal of your disbelief of these two points would have been regarded as dangerous and alarming heresy by our Pilgrim fathers.

And, *secondly*, take the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity. Here is the article. "Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and *wholly* defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, *the guilt of this sin was* IMPUTED, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. *From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.*" Now I need not ask if you believe all the statements in this quotation. I know you do not. For, in the first place, you reject the doctrine of *imputation*. Your friend and colleague, Dr. Woods, in his Letters to Dr. Ware, ridicules the idea of Adam's sin being imputed to his posterity. Dr. Appleton, late President of Bowdoin College, has a very powerful and conclusive argument against this view, in his volume of Sermons. And it is well known, that the Professors at Princeton are very bitter against the New England divines for giving up this belief of our Pilgrim fathers. In the second place, you know that the New Haven Professors have renounced the doctrine of our original corruption of soul and body being the cause of our actual transgressions. So that the whole article is virtually abandoned by the Connecticut divines. And you well

know, that an avowal of your disbelief of these two points would have been regarded as dangerous and alarming heresy by our Pilgrim fathers.

And, *thirdly*, take the doctrine of the damnation of infants. This was very generally received by the early Calvinists. Here you have the article which implies this horrid belief. "ELECT INFANTS, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth." Now I need not ask if you believe that any infants are among the non-elect; for Dr. Beecher has publicly declared that this doctrine of infant damnation is given up by the denomination.

And, *fourthly*, take the doctrine of free-will. The real Calvinists hold that our wills are not free. Here is the article. "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly *lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation.* So as *a natural man*, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, *is not able*, by his own strength, to convert himself, or *to prepare himself thereunto.*" I need not ask if all your leaders can assent to this article. I know you cannot. For in the first place, you know that the New Haven and New York divines are now controverting this very doctrine, and contending, that *man is able to prepare himself for conversion;* that he is active and not passive in regeneration. And in the second place, you know, that Dr. Beecher has advocated the freedom of the will with the conclusive arguments of Arminianism. One extract from a tract lately published on this subject will put the question beyond dispute. Here it is. "By a free moral agent, I mean a person who is capable of discerning between moral good and evil, *who is voluntary in the right or wrong course he pursues*, and who is praise or blame worthy, according as he obeys or disobeys the law of God." This is a direct contradiction of the article from our fathers' creed. And you must know that an avowal of your disbelief in these two points would have been considered dangerous and alarming heresy by the Pilgrims.

And, *fifthly*, take the doctrine of election and reprobation. Here it is. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, *are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.* Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, *without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them*, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious

grace. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth, or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice." These were very favorite doctrines with our Pilgrim fathers; and they preached them out openly and boldly. Now I suppose yourself and most of the orthodox clergy really believe these points; but many of them dare not acknowledge it either in private or in the pulpit. I have never heard the doctrine of reprobation preached but once in New England. But I think the great mass of your church members reject this view of both election and reprobation. And an avowal of such a belief would have been regarded as dangerous and alarming heresy by our Pilgrim fathers.

I could extend my quotations much farther, and point out many essential differences between the faith of the orthodox of our day and that of our Pilgrim fathers. But these are sufficient to convince every one, that you have departed from many doctrines which they regarded as *essential*. In short, they would not have acknowledged your belief as sound or orthodox; and had they given vent to their persecuting spirit, would have banished you from the commonwealth. And in view of these truths, why have you asserted your agreement in opinion with the Pilgrims? and why have you reproached the unitarians for their disagreement? Are you authorized to say just how far a person may depart from their creed, and still be their son in faith? If not, why do you blame others for doing precisely what you have done yourselves? I am astonished at such conduct in one of your standing.

What then must be our conclusion? Have not the unitarians observed most scrupulously the fundamental principles of the Pilgrims? In obedience to these principles, they have advanced the reformation, and renounced many of the absurdities of their doctrinal creed. Have not the orthodox violated their fundamental principles most palpably? And in disobedience of these principles, they have been compelled by the progress of truth to renounce several of the essential doctrines of the Pilgrim fathers. That the Pilgrims were frail, prejudiced, sinful mortals; that they lived in a comparatively dark and ignorant period of the world; that they sometimes acted inconsistently with their own principles as well as the precepts of the gospel; that they were sometimes filled with errors, superstitions, and idle fancies; that they sometimes manifested a bitter spirit; that they were sometimes persecutors; that they were not perfect models either in faith or practice for the imitation of Christians of the present day, I shall not undertake to deny. And if you claim for your denomination to be their imitators in these particulars, I certainly shall not dispute your pretensions.

IV. Harvard University.

The leaders of your party have recently as well as formerly manifested great hostility towards Harvard University. The last crusade against its peace, prosperity, and reputation was commenced by Dr. Beecher. A wearisome series of misrepresentations then followed in the Recorder, said to have been compiled principally by the Rev. Mr. Green of Boston. The Rev. Parsons Cook soon ushered into being some statements which his elder brethren had not sufficient nerve to publish. The last season, the Rev. Drs. Beecher, Fay, and Codman commissioned the Rev. Mr. Bennett to disseminate the various slanders of the orthodox leaders through the obscure villages of the commonwealth. And last, though not least, you have lent all your aid to this nefarious undertaking. But three of your charges, however, appear to me to be worthy of the least attention; and these I will now briefly notice.

1. You complain that the proceeds of funds given by orthodox individuals are appropriated to the support of unitarian instructers. To convince you of the unreasonableness and absurdity of this accusation, I will merely ask you to answer the five following questions. And, *first*, suppose the early benefactors of Harvard University had done precisely what was effected by the founders of your theological seminary; suppose they had embodied their peculiar religious opinions in a human creed; suppose they had solemnly ordered that this formulary should never be subjected to the least alteration, but must for ever remain the standard of religious truth in the college; suppose they had decreed that no individual should be employed as an instructer in the institution any longer than he could heartily assent to all the articles of the aforesaid creed; suppose they had done all this; and of what service would their funds now be to your denomination? None whatever. For you well know, that not a man in your party could now honestly assent to all the articles which would have been considered essential by the early friends of the University.

And, *secondly*, suppose the orthodox benefactors of the University had pointed out the publications which should be for ever used as text-books in the college; suppose they had specified the particular sentiments which must everlastingly be preached in the chapel, and what would now be the consequence? One of three things. Either the funds must remain entirely useless; or the last will and testament of the pious donors must be broken and disregarded; or the obscure corners of Europe would have to be ransacked for a professor, who should be exposed as the laughing-stock of the whole country. Yes; I really believe a smile at least would be excited on the gloomiest and most careworn countenance among the Calvinists themselves, if such a divine as the credulous Dr. Mather were now lecturing in the University, explaining the best methods for detecting and punishing witches;

attributing thunder-storms to the influence and agency of the Devil; taking his pupils out to dig for thunder-bolts at the foot of a tree scathed by lightning; describing comets as certain indications of approaching judgments; retailing wonderful stories of modern miracles; expounding the secret will of the Almighty; and enforcing the wholesome doctrine of eternal reprobation.

And, *thirdly*, why not extend your complaint to individuals, towns, and other literary institutions? For instance, take an orthodox governor. He is devoted to the interests of your denomination. He leaves a large property to be equally divided between two sons. One of them embraces unitarianism, and contributes generously to the promotion of those objects which his father could never approve. On your principle, his property must be taken from him, and given to the son who still believes more of the articles of their father's religious creed. Not only so. In the town north of this, there is a large fund for the support of the ministry. It was probably bestowed by orthodox individuals. It is now appropriated to the support of a unitarian minister. Perhaps you may collect some half a dozen orthodox females in the whole place. And on your principle, these ladies have a right to the proceeds of this fund, because their religious opinions approach nearer the creed of the original donors. But this is not all. You know that the University of Oxford was endowed by the Catholics. You know their funds were given for the maintenance and dissemination of their religious sentiments. You know the institution is now in the hands exclusively of episcopalians. You know the Catholics in Great Britain bear as large a proportion to the episcopalians, as the orthodox descendants of the early benefactors of Harvard University do to their unitarian posterity. On your principle then the claims of the Catholics should be immediately granted. In all these cases the progress of society should be disregarded; and if so, why not restore our commonwealth to the remaining remnants of savage tribes? But enough has been said to show the unreasonableness of the complaint.

And, *fourthly*, are you the proper person to bring this accusation against the free citizens of the commonwealth? For you will recollect that all the blame in this business falls upon the voters. They elect a majority of the board of overseers; by whom the appointment of every instructer in the institution must be confirmed. But I would have you look to the concerns of your Education Society. How many of the life-members are unitarians? How much of your funds was given by unitarian benevolence? Did these benefactors bestow their property for the education of orthodox young men? Did they wish to aid in training ministers to break up their own parishes, deny them the Christian name, and sentence them to hell for their honest opinions? Has any change taken place in public opinion which requires that funds thus bestowed should be exclusively appropriated to your party? When-

ever your directors are ready to assist young men of unitarian opinions, I shall be happy to recommend a few candidates. Perhaps some of the number will be those who have been dismissed from your list of beneficiaries for no other cause but embracing unitarianism. And after you shall have done this, you may prefer your complaint of the improper appropriation of funds against Harvard University.

But, *finally*, did the orthodox benefactors of Harvard University bind down their legacies to the maintenance of their religious opinions? No; they came to this country to advance the reformation; not to retard its progress. They were very confident that more light was yet to break from God's holy word; not that all its essential doctrines could then be embodied in a human standard. They greatly lamented that their friends in the old world had come to a period in religion; not that they were renouncing the absurd opinions of their unenlightened ancestors. They firmly believed that more truth had been revealed to them than to their Catholic fathers; and they fondly trusted that their children would be blessed with still greater illumination. With such views and feelings, they could not aid in suppressing free inquiry. They could not consistently confine the proceeds of their donations to those, and those only, who should ever after believe precisely their religious sentiments. They had sacrificed much in order to study and understand the Scriptures for themselves; and they could not conscientiously deprive their descendants of the exercise of a right which had cost them so dearly. They wished to promote good learning and pure religion; and they put sufficient confidence in their posterity to leave them at liberty to pursue the most expedient measures for the accomplishment of these purposes. They therefore put no such restrictions on the use of their benefactions, as everlasting creeds and unconstitutional trust-deeds. I think these considerations are enough to show the unreasonableness and absurdity of your first accusation.

2. You complain that your rights in Harvard University are wrested from you, and that the institution has assumed a sectarian character. To convince you of the unreasonableness and absurdity of this charge, I will ask a few explanatory questions: Is any religious test required of the students upon their entrance to the college? No; they are required simply to produce a certificate of good moral character. Are not all the students admitted to the same instructions? Yes; all are treated with equal attention. Are the proceeds of the funds given for the assistance of indigent students confined to unitarians? No; they are bestowed without the least regard to the religious opinions of the applicants. Are the honors of college bestowed with a partial hand? No; parts are assigned in strict accordance with the standing of the students. Are all students obliged to attend upon unitarian preaching? No; if of age, they may choose their own meeting; if not, they may go wherever

their parents request. And they can be accommodated with seats in the churches, either of the orthodox, the episcopalians, the baptists, the universalists, the methodists, the Swedenborgians, or the Catholics. Are any measures adopted to prepossess the young men in favor of unitarian opinions, such as giving them tracts, praying for the conversion of the orthodox, pointing them out as heretics, holding conference and prayer and inquiry meetings? No; nothing of the kind. Efforts are indeed made to induce them to love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves; and beyond this, they are left to draw their own views from the sacred Scriptures. In what consists the sectarian character of the Institution? For the life of me, I cannot think of one particular. And what rights are wrested from you any more than from me? I certainly know of none whatever.

And are you the proper person to prefer such complaints against Harvard University. Look at some of the other institutions in the land. I will say nothing of your Theological Seminary, which is so notoriously sectarian, and where every student who does not find the articles of your human creed in the Bible must receive such illiberal treatment. I will say nothing of the Academy connected with your Institution, where so much is done to prejudice youth in favor of orthodoxy, where so many young men have been driven out of all belief in Christianity, and where unitarians are afraid to send their children, lest they should be made thorough infidels. I will say nothing of Dartmouth, where Edwards on the Will was lately introduced as a text-book. I will come to Yale and Amherst Colleges established for the people, and where as many unitarian parents send their sons, as there are orthodox who send to Cambridge. Can a unitarian instructer find employment in either institution? No; while at Cambridge some two or three are engaged in the government and instruction of the students. And what religious sentiments must the unitarian student hear advanced week after week? The most rigid orthodoxy. Look at Dr. Dwight's five volumes of Lectures delivered in the chapel at New Haven. Do not these contain all your essential doctrines; and are not all your arguments against unitarianism arranged in battle array? And must he not also hear those who embrace unitarian Christianity held up in orthodox prayers and sermons as totally depraved, unconverted, infidels, and sentenced to eternal condemnation for their honest opinions? Must he not be singled out by the hopefully pious young men as an object of peculiar attention on account of the good influence he might exert in his father's family, should he be once regenerated; and is he not so beset with tracts, and books, and exhortations, and prayers, and conferences, as to disgust him with the very name of religion? In all this there is nothing sectarian in your opinion; no rights are wrested from any one; all are permitted to enjoy perfect *liberty* to think and act as they please, so long as they will think like the orthodox.

But what would you have changed at Cambridge in order to restore your wrested rights? You would have a *majority* of the instructers taken from the orthodox denomination, and an orthodox professor of divinity appointed. And what would be the consequence of such an alteration? The evangelical instructers would have frequent prayer-meetings, to pray for the conversion of the liberal members of the government. All students of hopeful piety would be invited to unite in such benevolent devotions, in order to destroy their confidence in their unitarian teachers. The great body of the students, nine-tenths of the whole, would be exhorted to abjure that system of religion which "never brought a soul to Jesus Christ and to heaven, and which never will." They would be entreated to subscribe the orthodox creed, and in that very act, to sign the warrant of eternal damnation of their parents. Then they would be qualified to spend a useful vacation at home, in teaching their brothers and sisters to despise the religion of their fathers and mothers, and to disregard their counsel and authority. A few hundreds of tracts would be generously presented to them to scatter among their heathen neighbours; and aid in getting up a religious excitement in the parish of a unitarian minister. I suppose if these things could be effected, you would feel that your rights were restored, and that the sectarian character of the college was destroyed. But I think sufficient has been said to show the unreasonableness and absurdity of your second accusation.

3. You, or rather your agent, has declared that it would be tempting God for orthodox parents to send their sons to Harvard University. Why so? Is the Institution in so bad a state that their morals would be endangered? O no. Students who have come to Cambridge from Amherst and Yale uniformly declare, that the order, the morals, the sobriety at religious exercises, the attention to study are better at Cambridge than at either of the other colleges. A member of an orthodox church who left Cambridge and joined Amherst, has lately affirmed that there is more roguery, more dissipation, less order, at Amherst than at Cambridge, and that he wished himself well back to the heretical institution.

But finally, what is the *real* cause of all the orthodox complaints against Harvard University? Simply this. It is a truly liberal institution. Orthodox young men have entered there with the intention of being preachers in that denomination. They were not troubled on account of their religious opinions, but taught to reason correctly. The same principles of investigation were carried into religious subjects, and naturally led them to renounce the inconsistencies and absurdities of Calvinism. On this account, the orthodox ministers think it would be tempting God for their church members to send their sons to Cambridge, because they might possibly be led to embrace correct principles of reasoning. I believe this to be the sole cause of all your complaints.

V. Catholics.

I perceive, Sir, that you have brought in the Catholics for a share of your censure. I suppose this ought to have been expected, since it is in such perfect keeping with the spirit and proceedings of your leaders. More than two years ago, the alarm that the Catholics were increasing in our free country was loudly sounded. A violent attack was then commenced upon their opinions and measures. Base suspicions respecting their motives, and cruel insinuations respecting their designs, were whispered through the orthodox ranks. Parents were urged, a little beyond the bounds of strict modesty, to take their children from Catholic seminaries. Inflammatory appeals were fulminated from many an evangelical pulpit. Public meetings of the clergy were harangued on this most alarming topic. And all this noise, and warning, and denunciation for what cause? Simply because the scattered members of the mother church, in this land of boasted freedom, have thought proper to form themselves into regular societies; to erect churches for their own accommodation; and to recommend their ancient faith and forms of worship to Protestant Christians, by their conversation, preaching, and publications. Simply because the higher authorities in Europe have kindly sent pecuniary aid to their poorer brethren in America, and furnished them with learned instructers and preachers of their own denomination. In relation to the orthodox denunciations of Catholics, permit me to ask you *four* questions.

1. In the *first* place, *in condemning the measures of the Catholic church, do you not pronounce a more severe sentence of condemnation on the leaders of your own denomination?* What then are your accusations? Do you aver, that the Catholic church conceals the Bible from the common people? This charge may be true in some measure in foreign countries. But admit its truth to the fullest extent; and is not the conduct of the orthodox leaders in this very particular much more criminal? You indeed make exertions to place the Bible in the hands of every person, and exhort all moral agents to search its contents with perseverance and prayer. But let an individual pursue his inquiries into the meaning of the Scriptures ever so faithfully; let him exhibit the spirit and principles of the gospel in his temper and behaviour ever so perfectly; still you deny him the Christian name; you exclude him from the Christian ordinances; you deprive him of his means of subsistence, unless he will assent to your human creed as the standard of Christian truth. Nay, worse than this. Should he refuse to express his religious opinions in any other words than those of the sacred writers, you heap upon him every opprobrious epithet; you withhold from him every Christian right and privilege; you even sentence him to endless torments in hell. Compare this conduct with the Catholic measure of concealing the Bible. Some of their ministers in former ages studied the Scriptures; and now their conclusions must be received by the people as the inspired truth, or

they must abide the consequences of their refusal. So of the orthodox. Some of your priests of former ages searched the sacred records, and now their conclusions, which have been embodied in human formularies, must be acknowledged as the standard of gospel truth by the people, or they must suffer the bitter consequence of their independence. Is not this cheating your hearers with the name of religious liberty, while you hold them in the most abject slavery? Would it not be more desirable for them to be deprived of the Scriptures themselves, than to be thus tormented for an honest adherence to their apparent meaning? Is not this conduct of the orthodox leaders in this particular much more criminal than that of the Catholic church? — more criminal, because perpetrated in direct violation of your professed Protestant and congregational principles, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment?

2. In the *second* place, do you aver, that the Catholic church is exclusive? — that she claims to be the only true church? — that she regards all who depart from her faith as heretics? — and that she consigns all without her pale to final damnation? Well, admit the truth of this charge in its full extent; and is not the conduct of the orthodox leaders in this very particular much more criminal? Have you not declared, that learned and pious ministers of your own denomination, of the *congregational* denomination, were not *Christian* ministers? Have you not declared, that regularly organized and exemplary churches, of your own denomination, were not *Christian* churches? Have you not declared, that the ordinances of sincere and obedient disciples, of your own denomination, were not *Christian* institutions? Have you not repeatedly excluded exemplary and devoted believers, of your own denomination, from your ecclesiastical councils, your ministerial associations, your congregational churches, and your Christian fellowship, as heretics? Have you not denied to them the Christian name, and privileges, and consolations? Have you not persecuted them with suspicions, insinuations, privations, and denunciations? Have you not even shut against them the gates of heaven, and deliberately consigned them to unutterable and endless torments? And all this for what cause? Because their souls were polluted, their morals abandoned, or their characters wicked? No; nothing of the kind is alleged against them. No; but simply because they adhered scrupulously to the pillars of the reformation. Simply because they chose to obey Christ rather than any earthly master. Simply because they received the teachings of the gospel as their only guide of faith and practice. Simply because they would not express their religious opinions in the misty phrases of man's invention. Simply because they would acknowledge no standard of Christian faith but the Bible. Are you not then as exclusive as the Catholics, so far as you have power to execute your decrees? And is not this conduct of your leaders in this

particular much more criminal than that of the Catholics? — more criminal, because perpetrated in direct violation of your Protestant and congregational principles, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment?

3. In the *third* place, do you aver, that the Catholic church adopts unchristian plans for maintaining and propagating her religious faith? —that her members organize themselves into societies too feeble for the support of a pastor? — apply to foreign aid for the means to erect houses of worship? — take unwearied pains to proselyte from other denominations? — and that her priests acquire absolute control of the female population? Will you affirm that her bishops forbid the people to read a Protestant publication? — or attend a Protestant meeting? — or send their children to a Protestant sunday school? Well, admit the truth of these charges to the full extent; and is not the conduct of the orthodox leaders much more criminal in this particular? Look at the measures of your party the last dozen years, for promoting the Calvinistic faith? Have you not organized orthodox churches, when you could obtain only one, or two, or four male members in the whole town? Have you not erected meetinghouses for their accommodation, with money which had been extorted by over persuasion from the poor, the embarrassed, the hard-laboring, the orphan and widow? Have you not ordained ministers over these feeble societies, when you knew that three quarters, or two thirds, or one half of their salaries must be obtained by a system of most pertinacious begging? Have you not adopted almost every species of proselytism? such as entering the united and peaceable societies of your brethren, and urging them to leave their present pastor and congregation? Have you not exhorted your people to avoid a unitarian publication as they would a cup of poison? and never to converse with unitarians on their religious opinions? Has not a writer in a late "Recorder" endeavoured to frighten orthodox church members from attending upon unitarian preaching, when visiting their friends or attending the General Court in Boston? Have you not forbidden their attending upon unitarian preaching and ordinances; and when you could not deter them by threats, have you not excommunicated them from your fellowship for the offence? Have you not forbidden your children to attend a unitarian sunday school, and when the father has insisted on the exercise of this right, has not the orthodox mother hidden their books? Nay, worse. Has not an orthodox church lately excommunicated some of its members for exercising the liberty of attending the communions of another orthodox church? Has not an orthodox council, with the Rev. Mr. Storrs at its head, sanctioned its proceedings? Has not an appeal been made by the aggrieved to such bold advocates of religious freedom as yourself and your respected colleague? And especially, have not your preachers taken unwearied pains to secure the influence of the

women, by visiting them in the absence of their husbands, appealing to their fears, and exhorting them to conceal your proposals from their husbands? And all this for what cause? Not because you really feared, that one soul more would go to hell if you neglected these exertions; for this would be mere idle pretence in the believers in election. But simply because the unitarians will not subscribe human creeds, and choose to make the Scriptures the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice. Is not the conduct of the orthodox leaders in this particular much more criminal than that of the Catholics? — more criminal, because perpetrated in direct violation to your professed Protestant and congregational principles of the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment?

4. In the *fourth* place, do you aver, that the Catholic faith is unsatisfactory and absurd? — that the members of her church do not give the best evidence of piety? — and that she suffers the repose of the sick and dying to be disturbed by the begging of her priests? Admit these charges to the full extent; and in these particulars are not the faith and conduct of the orthodox leaders more defective and criminal? If you are safer than the unitarians because you believe more, are not the Catholics safer than the orthodox on the same principle? Have they not ten times the evidence in support of the doctrine of transubstantiation, that you have in support of the trinity? And can the natural tendency of any of their articles of belief be more immoral, than that of total depravity, moral inability, final perseverance, election and reprobation? And if you are more pious than unitarians, because you are more charitable and prayerful, are not the Catholics more pious than the orthodox on the same ground? Do they not give ten times the amount to benevolent objects according to their circumstances? Have they not done a hundred times as much in the cause of missions? And do they not daily offer up manifold more prayers? And as to disturbing the sick and dying, have not individuals in your party done the very same thing in this Commonwealth? Have there not been repeated instances, in which legacies have been begged of the departing for orthodox purposes? Have there not been some cases in which your ministers were concerned, much to the detriment of their own character, as well as to the dissatisfaction of surviving friends? Has there not been so much iniquity practised in this way, as to lead our lawgivers to take up the subject in the halls of legislation? But this is not the worst part of the business. Have not orthodox ministers threatened the sick and dying with hell torments, unless they performed impossibilities? I will relate only two instances of such conduct out of the many which have come to my knowledge. An orthodox minister was invited to visit a young lady, apparently near her end. He asked her, if she was willing to be damned? She answered in the negative. He then assured her, that she could entertain no good hope of salvation. The effect produced

on her system was such, that her physician soon let him understand that his absence would be much more agreeable than his presence. The other case is more aggravated. An orthodox minister called upon a very sick widow, who had been several years an exemplary member of a unitarian church. His presence was neither solicited nor desired by the suffering patient. He assured her, that she could not expect to be saved, unless she believed in the divinity of Christ. She afterward observed, that such unchristian treatment would have deprived her of her senses, had she not searched the Scriptures for herself, and known in whom she confided. And is not this requiring an impossibility? Can you believe a proposition, not merely without evidence, but contrary to the plain testimony of inspired writers? The Catholic requires nothing but money; and this all can give who possess it. The orthodox require belief without evidence; and this no one can give. In making such a requisition then, is not the conduct of the orthodox leaders much more criminal than that of the Catholic? — more criminal, because perpetrated in direct violation of your professed Protestant and congregational principles, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment?

I think, Sir, that the leaders of the orthodox are guilty of the very same offences which they condemn in the Catholics. I am not alone in this opinion. Ministers of your own party have advanced the same sentiment. I will give you one long extract from the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, the greatest orthodox divine of the present period, as you all acknowledge. Had his statements come from the pen of a unitarian, you would have considered them slanderous. But as they confirm all my insinuations, I hope you will be convinced by such evangelical testimony. Here is the quotation.

"Let us, therefore, take a nearer look of popery, and try to find out how much of popery there is in the religion of Protestants. *First*, then, it is said of papists, that they ascribe an infallibility to the pope, so that, if he were to say one thing and the Bible another, his authority would carry it over the authority of God. And, think you, my brethren, that there is no such popery among you? Is there no taking of your religion upon trust from another, when you should draw it fresh and unsullied from the fountain-head of inspiration? You all have, or ought to have, Bibles; and how often is it repeated there, Hearken diligently unto me? Now, do you obey this requirement, by making the reading of your Bibles a distinct and earnest exercise? Do you ever dare to bring your favorite minister to the tribunal of the word, or would you tremble at the presumption of such an attempt, so that the hearing of the word carries a greater authority over your mind than the reading of the word? Now, this want of daring, this trembling at the very idea of dissent from your minister, this indolent acquiescence in his doctrine, is just calling another man master; it is putting the authority of

man over the authority of God; it is throwing yourself into a prostrate attitude at the foot-stool of human infallibility; it is not just kissing the toe of reverence, but it is the profounder degradation of the mind, and of all its faculties; and without the name of popery, that name which lights up so ready an antipathy in your bosoms, your souls may be infected with the substantial poison, and your consciences be weighed down by the oppressive shackles of popery. And all this in the noonday effulgence of a Protestant country, where the Bible in your mother tongue, circulates among all your families, where it may be met with on every shelf, and is ever soliciting you to look to the wisdom that is inscribed upon its pages. O! how tenderly should we deal with the prejudices of a rude and uneducated people, who have no Bibles, and no art of reading among them to unlock its treasures, when we think that, even in this our land, the voice of human authority carries so mighty an influence along with it, and veneration for the word of God is darkened and polluted by a blind veneration for its interpreters.

"And, *secondly*, we tremble to read of the fulminations that have issued in other days from a conclave of cardinals. Have we no conclaves, and no fulminations, and no orders of inquisition, in our own country? Is there no professing brotherhood, or no professing sisterhood, to deal their censorious invectives around them, upon the members of an excommunicated world? There is such a thing as a religious public. There is a little flock on the one hand, and a world lying in wickedness on the other. But have a care, ye who think yourselves of the favored few, how you never transgress the mildness, and charity, and unostentatious virtues of the gospel; lest you hold out a distorted picture of Christianity in your neighbourhood, and impose that as religion on the fancy of the credulous, which stands at as wide a distance from the religion of the New Testament, as do the services of an exploded superstition, or the mummeries of an antiquated ritual.

"But, *thirdly*, it is said that papists worship saints, and fall down to graven images. This is very, very bad. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. But let us take ourselves to task upon this charge also. Have we no consecrated names in the annals of reformation? — no worthies who hold too commanding a place in the remembrance and affection of Protestants? Are there no departed theologians, whose works hold too domineering an ascendency over the faith and practice of Christians? Are there no laborious compilations of other days, which, instead of interpreting the Bible, have given its truths a shape, and a form, and an arrangement, that confer upon them another impression, and impart to them another influence, from the pure and original record? We may not bend the knee in any sensible chamber of imagery, at the remembrance of favorite saints. But do we not bend the understanding before the volumes of favorite authors, and do an homage to those representations of minds of

the men of other days, which should be exclusively given to the representation of the mind of the Spirit, as put down in the book of the Spirit's revelation? It is right that each of us should give the contribution of his own talents, and his own learning, to this most interesting cause; but let the great drift of our argument be to prop the authority of the Bible, and to turn the eye of earnestness upon its pages; for if any work instead of exalting the Bible, shall be made, by the misjudging reverence of others, to stand in its place, then we introduce a false worship into the heart of a reformed country, and lay prostrate the consciences of men, under the yoke of a spurious authority."

VI. Universalists.

I perceive, Sir, that you have renewed your attack upon the rights of universalists. In your election sermon, you contended that those, who do not believe in punishment after death, should not be permitted to take an oath of office or trust. You have again repeated the same opinion. Now let us see to what this threatened disability amounts. Suppose your only son should be stabbed to the heart by an abandoned assassin. Suppose that ten of the most respectable universalists in the land should happen to be eye-witnesses of the horrid transaction. Suppose the murderer should be seized and brought to trial before an orthodox jury. Suppose no evidence of his guilt could be produced but the testimony of these gentlemen. According to your doctrine, these witnesses are unworthy to be sworn, and therefore the prisoner must go unpunished. Nor is this all. All universalists of this class must be excluded from every office of honor, trust, or emolument, either civil, political, military, commercial, diplomatic, or religious, where an oath of fidelity or allegiance is required. And all this for what cause? Simply because they are unable to find sufficient evidence to believe the wicked will be punished in the next existence; and because they either cannot believe without evidence, or will not act the part of hypocrites. In relation to your denunciation of universalists, permit me to ask you *four* questions.

In the first place, — *In condemning the universalist as unworthy to take an oath, do you not pronounce sentence of condemnation on yourself?* You would deprive him of this right, because he does not believe that he shall be punished for his present sins in another world. And is not this your own belief respecting yourself? Do you not believe that God has elected a definite number of the human family to eternal salvation? Do you not believe that none but the elect will be finally saved? Do you not believe that some of this number continue in wickedness until the very day of their death? Do you not believe that no punishment will hereafter be inflicted on the regenerated for any deeds done in the body? Do you not believe yourself to be one of this favored company? Do you not feel morally certain that you shall suffer no misery in the world to come for the sins you may here commit? Do

you not feel as positive that you shall be only and continually happy in the next existence, as the Rev. Mr. Ballou does that he shall? How then do your cases differ? I must confess that I am unable to discern the difference. And still you would exclude him from his civil rights, on account of his honest religious belief. But if you entertain precisely the same belief respecting yourself, why should you not be subjected to the same disability? Or if your testimony may be received under oath, why may not his? It may; and unless I am greatly deceived, you will find a great majority of the community as ready to receive his evidence as your own, and as willing to trust his integrity as that of believers in the doctrine of election. So that you condemn yourself, while condemning the universalist.

2. In the second place, — *In condemning the universalist doctrine as dangerous, do you not pronounce sentence of condemnation on you own belief?* You denounce his opinion, that God makes impenitent sinners holy between death and the resurrection, as of immoral tendency. Is not this your own faith? Do you not believe that all infants are born into this world "personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God?" Do you not believe that the Holy Spirit converts all who die in infancy, so that their depravity produces no misery in the world to come? Do you not believe that many who live immoral lives are changed from sin to holiness in the hour of death? How then does your belief upon this point differ from that of the universalist? Is not this the essence of his system, that God changes the polluted soul from depravity to purity before it enters another existence? You certainly agree, that God has power to produce such a change, and that he actually effects it in many instances. I have no doubt, you will aver that there is an infinite difference between your views in another respect. You will affirm, that while the universalist believes God will change *every* impenitent soul, so that no one shall suffer punishment after death; you, on the contrary, believe that he will change the souls of the elect only, and that the reprobate must be eternally damned. I well know that you make such declarations in your conversation, preaching, and publications. But do not actions sometimes speak louder than words? When an orthodox minister has buried a profligate son, what has been his opinion concerning the future destiny of the abandoned child? When an orthodox parent has consigned to the grave an unconverted daughter, what has been his belief respecting her eternal condition? Have they believed, that the children of their prayers and affections were sentenced to unutterable, unchangeable, never-ending burnings? I put the question to your own conscience. No; scarcely an instance can you produce, in which an orthodox Christian has really believed that an endeared relative, however wicked, was to be for ever damned. So that if you take the feelings, the wishes, the hopes, the true faith of your denomination for the standard of truth on this question, there will

be but few souls left among us for endless torments. All this results from your previous belief, that God may, and can, and actually does convert the most depraved wretches in the very hour of death; a belief which I regard as exceedingly erroneous. All therefore are willing the Devil should have sinful strangers and enemies; but they firmly trust that sovereign grace will save all sinful acquaintances and friends. And such a belief the orthodox do not hesitate to avow in conversation. Nay; they even proclaim it to the world in the epitaphs they place on the tombstones of the abandoned. The following shall suffice as one example of the many that might be quoted:

"The mother's sigh, nor friendship's tear,
Cannot recall thy spirit here;
Yet may a boon more blessed be given,
Hope tells us, we shall meet in heaven."

Is it not then evident, that in condemning the universalist doctrine as of immoral tendency, you pronounce sentence of condemnation on your own belief?

3. In the third place, — *In denying the universalist his civil rights, do you not strike a death blow at religious liberty?* Will you aver, that he does not make the Bible the standard of his faith and practice? Will you affirm, that he is unfaithful in his examination of the Scriptures? Will you declare, that he is not sincere in his profession? No; I think you will not dare to heap these charges upon his head; for you must know that he has the same right and reason to accuse you of the same offences. And if you can neither bring nor substantiate these accusations against the universalist, your rule of exclusion for honest religious opinions must be productive of endless mischief. For if you may this day deprive him of his civil rights on account of his sincere belief on the subject of punishment, you may tomorrow deprive the unitarian of his rights on account of his sentiments respecting the nature of the Deity. You may aver, that the doctrine of the trinity is plainly revealed on every page of the Bible, and that whoever rejects this fundamental article of Christianity, must be considered an atheist. This has been virtually declared by more than one of your denomination. But you need not stop here. Next week you may affirm that the doctrine of election is clearly taught in the Scriptures; and, with one of your most distinguished divines, aver, that "it is absolutely necessary to approve of the doctrine of reprobation, in order to be saved." On this plea, you may proceed to deprive the Methodists of their equal and unalienable rights. In your plan of proscription, there is no resting-place, until you have silenced all who will not assent to your Calvinistic creed. Now turn the tables. Suppose the majority of voters next year should prove to be universalists. Suppose they should act on your principle, and deny the orthodox minority their civil rights. Would they not have as much right, and in their own

opinion as much reason, for such a proceeding, as you now have for the measure which you propose in relation to them? Is it possible for you to think their system of faith more erroneous, than they believe yours to be? Is it possible for you to regard their doctrine of punishment with more abhorrence, than they feel in respect to your belief of eternal decrees and endless torments? Why then would they not be justified in acting on the same principle of condemnation, when they possess the power of executing their resolves? I can see no difference between the two cases. If you may deprive any man of his civil rights on account of his honest religious opinions, because you are the majority; I know not why any other sect of Christians may not return the compliment, when they secure the majority. Is not this principle of exclusion wholly subversive of religious liberty? Certainly. For wherever any man is punished, no matter what the mode or manner, for his religious sentiments, there can exist no religious freedom. And by advocating this rule of proscription, by establishing this civil disability, do you not aim a death blow at free inquiry and religious liberty?

4. In the fourth place,—*In depriving the universalist of his civil rights on account of his religious opinions, do you adopt the most Christian remedy for the existing evil?* Just look at some of the consequences of such a course of proceeding. You fear he will perjure himself, if admitted to an oath, because he believes such a crime would receive its full punishment in this world. To prevent the offence, therefore, you would remove the possibility of the temptation; you would not permit him to enter upon the stand of legal witnesses. You would ascertain his particular belief before you would admit his testimony. Now on the same ground, you may imprison your neighbour, because you fear he may be tempted to steal your property. You might place him beyond the possibility of temptation. But I know of no laws, human or divine, which are founded on such unjust principles. All with which I am acquainted, go on the principle, that it will be time enough to punish the criminal after the offence shall have been committed. I know of none which require the punishment of the innocent, for fear he may be tempted to commit iniquity. And does not our own Constitution make specific provision for the punishment of perjury? Whenever a person is convicted of such a crime, will not the law be executed? Is not this the proper tribunal for all such offences? If the guilty is not detected, will not the divine punishment be as certain, as if he believed in endless burnings? And should not the credibility of a witness be determined, not by his religious creed, but by his previous character? And on this ground, have not the communicants in universalist churches as high standing for strict honesty, rigid impartiality, and firm integrity, as the professors in orthodox communions? Would it not then be the more Christian course to regard such persons as

Christians, so far as they profess their belief in revelation, and exhibit a Christian character? Would it not be better to convince them of their errors by fair and Scriptural reasoning, and by exhibiting undoubted evidence of the certainty of a future righteous retribution? Now, Sir, I am not saying all this, because I feel any partiality for the doctrine of no punishment after death. No; I regard this opinion equally erroneous with the one cherished by the orthodox on this subject. But I say this, because I believe that every man, who makes the Bible his standard of faith and practice, and exhibits the fruits of the gospel in his daily walk and conversation, is entitled to the Christian name, rights, and privileges; and because I believe all Christian believers should be on an equal standing in the sight of our civil government. And when I meet an individual of this character, let him be called by what name he may, let me think him in what error I may, I will endeavour to do unto him as I would have him do unto me. And I think a candid consideration of this subject will induce you to regard this as the most Christian remedy for the supposed evil. For an opposite course appears to me subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

VII. Tracts.

I perceive, Sir, that you have alluded to the subject of religious tracts. You assert that unitarians accuse the orthodox of being raving mad, and destitute of modesty and humility, because they engage in their *publication*. You have probably come as near the truth in this statement, as in many others in your late pamphlet. I think you would find it very difficult to mention the unitarian who ever made such an accusation. But for my own part, I am free to confess, that some of the measures adopted by your leaders for the *distribution* of tracts appear to me very singular. In order to foist them into unitarian families, they have come in the darkness of night, and put them in our well-curbs and our work-shops, scattered them in our door-yards and our gardens, thrown them into our entries and our out-houses, and tied them to our pump-handles and our door-latches. They have stuffed them into the hats and pockets of our dependents, thrust them into the hands and bosoms of our children, and concealed them among the leaves of our borrowed books. They have scattered them in our public and private walks, thrown them to us from waggons and stage-coaches, and strewed them in bar-rooms, and canal-boats, and steam-boats, from Maine to New Orleans. And in these various ways, they have become as plenty in some of our houses, as were the frogs in the dwellings of the Egyptians, not to say as noisome.

But this is not all. A new method of sowing this precious seed has lately been invented, and has already been put into extensive operation. Let me illustrate this assertion by an example of recent occurrence. The circumstances are briefly these. There are about one thousand inhabitants in the place. They all attend a unitarian meeting. One

of your disorganizers enters the peaceful fold, and succeeds in turning some of the flock from their present pastor. They are organized into a feeble church. Their secession takes from the annual salary from five to ten dollars. A *shanty* is thrown up for a place of worship; and a minister is ordained over them. Some of this new society are in indigent circumstances; others are deeply in debt to their unitarian neighbours; all together they are unable to pay but one third of their teacher's small salary; and but few of the number are particularly distinguished either for superior acquirements, or superior morals. In this situation, they resolve to *present* every family in the whole town with a religious tract on the first of each month. Agents are appointed; the work is commenced with impartiality; no individual, not even the unitarian minister, is neglected. They feel justified in spending their time and money for this purpose, when other important duties claim their attention. Such is an exact and true description; and there are doubtless many similar instances within this Commonwealth. How much modesty and humility are exhibited in such proceedings, I leave you to determine.

But this is not the worst of the case. These agents will feel themselves insulted, if you either refuse to receive their offering, or offer them a unitarian tract in return. This assertion may be illustrated by two examples. The first is this. The tract-distributer knocked at the front door of the house of a wealthy and learned unitarian Christian. He told the servant that he wished to leave a tract for the family. The gentleman overheard his remark, and politely informed him, that he felt qualified to select the reading for his own house-hold, and was able to pay for his books. The pious saint burst into a rage, said he did not expect such treatment in a Christian land, and insisted on leaving the pamphlet. The other case is this. I passed down the Ohio river in the same steam-boat with one of your officious tract-distributers. He was frequently thrusting his dingy publications into the very face and eyes of the travellers. He was asked how he should regard the conduct of any one who refused his gratuitous offering. He said he should consider it ungentlemanly and unchristian. A unitarian tract was then offered to him. He cast his eye over the title-page, and shrunk back as from a deadly serpent. He was reminded of his former observation, and pronounced self-condemned. But neither shame nor entreaty could induce him to read a word of the heretical doctrine. He was literally obedient to the command of your leaders, who have cautioned their readers to avoid unitarian publications as they would a cup of poison. These are mere specimens of daily occurrences.

Now, Sir, would you exhibit such proceedings as the most worthy examples of orthodox modesty and humility? Let me endeavour to bring this measure home to your own bosom. Suppose then a very feeble

unitarian society should now be organized in your neighbourhood. Suppose it should consist of some ten or a dozen males of little education or influence or usefulness; and some twenty or thirty females. Suppose they should send you a copy of the following document: "At a meeting of the first unitarian church in South Andover the following preamble and resolves were unanimously adopted. Whereas divine Providence has surrounded us by those who have embraced soul-destroying errors, and are hastening to perdition; and whereas the Theological Seminary in this place has essentially renounced the Scriptures, and set up a human standard of religious belief; and whereas we cannot answer to our final Judge with an approving conscience, unless we do all in our power to stay this destructive heresy; — therefore resolved, that we will distribute a *Christian* tract to every family in this heathenish settlement on the first of each month; and also resolved, that since the divinity school on the Hill may be regarded as the fountain-head of this pernicious infidelity, we will present to every professor and student two *Christian* tracts on the first of each month." Suppose that on the first day of next January, while you are at breakfast, you should observe a female busybody pass by your window. Suppose one of your younger children should answer to her rap, and receive with the specified tracts, this observation: "I am the agent for distributing these religious works in this school district. Here are two for your father and the rest for the family. I hope you will all peruse them prayerfully, and that they may be blessed to your conversion to truth and godliness." Suppose she should then extend her errand of mercy to each of the students. This would serve to let you understand what is now doing at the instigation of your leaders. I hope you will seriously meditate upon this statement, and let us know how much modesty and humility would be indicated by such an undertaking. I know of no way of bringing this business home to your people but by returning the compliment.

VIII. SWITZERLAND.

In relation to the religious persecutions of Switzerland, you have fallen into a most egregious mistake. I will quote the passage from your Letter. These are your words. "*We look to Switzerland; we see the wandering exile pastors there thrust out from their own country, or languishing in dungeons, and their families begging their bread, because these dauntless heralds of salvation have dared to preach Christ and him crucified.* WE CANNOT HELP KNOWING THAT UNITARIANISM HAS DONE THIS." Now this last assertion has not the least foundation in truth. Unitarianism has had nothing whatever to do with these persecutions to which you allude. The literal fact is this. One party of Calvinists have been persecuting another party, for being more zealous and rigid in their views and measures. And I will now prove the five following propositions. *First*, that the regular church in the cantons of Vaud and Berne, in Switzerland, has caused the persecution of some

of their brethren for separating from their national religious establishment. *Secondly*, that these persecutors believe the doctrine of the trinity, and preach the deity, atonement, and grace of Christ. *Thirdly*, that these persecutors still retain the name of Presbyterians and Calvinists. *Fourthly*, that these persecutors still give their assent to the Calvinistic confession of faith. And *fifthly*, that they have been among the persecutors of the unitarians at Geneva.

And first, take a passage from the Eclectic Review, the standard orthodox journal of England. "The canton of Vaud, in Switzerland, is about the size of the county of Essex; its population is estimated at a little more than one hundred and forty-two thousand. It had been for almost three centuries, dependent upon the canton of Berne; but the changes consequent upon the French revolution raised it to the rank of a separate canton. The seat of government is Lausanne, and the supreme power is lodged in an aristocratical Council of State. The people have long borne the character of enlightened and liberal; *but recent events have forcibly and painfully proved that they do not possess a government worthy of them.*" I will now give you an extract from one of the petitions presented to the Lausanne Council of State by some of the persecuted Christians. "The undersigned have separated from the national church of this canton, and have formed themselves into a church according to Scriptural order, as appointed by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and under which discipline they desire to live and die." These are sufficient to prove that separation from the national church was the cause of persecutions in Switzerland.

Take, *secondly*, an extract from the Letters of Canonicus to Dr. Channing, written by the late Rev. Mr. Shed, orthodox minister in Abington. Here it is. "*In regard to the doctrine of the* TRINITY, *so far as I can learn, that is still held in the canton of Vaud.*" Remember that this acknowledgement comes from one of your own men, when writing on this very subject of dispute. Take another extract from the orthodox Eclectic Review. These are the important words. "*One of the two professors of divinity in the academy of Lausanne had particularly directed his Lectures to the confirmation of the Scripture doctrines concerning* THE DEITY, ATONEMENT, AND GRACE OF CHRIST. The effect upon his auditors was great. A new life and energy appeared among the students and the younger ministers. Evangelical principles were not left to slumber in the formalities of the academic hall, but were brought forth into the exemplification of experience and action. *The professor became alarmed. He seems to have thought that the pupils had no right to go beyond the length of his cord; and, O the weakness and wickedness of the human heart!* BECAME A CHIEF INSTRUMENT IN PROCURING THOSE LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS WHICH HAVE BROUGHT SCANDAL UPON HIS COUNTRY." These are sufficient to prove that the chief persecutors believed the trinity, and preached the deity, atonement, and grace of Christ.

Take, *thirdly*, another extract from the orthodox Eclectic Review. Speaking of Lausanne, the writer observes: "Its ecclesiastical establishment is Protestant and *Presbyterian, nominally* CALVINISTIC." The orthodox ministers of London held a public meeting "to express their abhorrence of the persecution and their sympathy with the persecuted." Take one extract from their resolutions on the occasion. This is the passage. "That it is with astonishment and sorrow that this body has received, from different and credible sources, the information, that in Switzerland, which used to be regarded as an asylum of those who fled from persecution, and particularly in the Canton of Vaud, under a Protestant government and PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, a severe persecution has been for more than a year exercised upon peaceable citizens, of spotless moral and political character, for no alleged crime, but the fact of their thinking it their duty to dissent from the church establishment of that country, and their attempting accordingly to hold assemblies for religious worship, in the way which to them appears most agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and most conducive to their own moral improvement." These are sufficient to prove that the persecutors are known by the name of Calvinists and Presbyterians.

Take, *fourthly*, another extract from the orthodox Eclectic Review. Here it is. "Our readers are probably well acquainted with the fact, that the *doctrines* which aroused the horror of the Landamman and the Council of State, *were no other than the very confession of faith which*, SINCE FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIX, HAS BEEN THE LEGAL FORMULARY OF THEIR OWN NATIONAL CHURCH." Take a quotation from an Address to the Council of State by three of those ministers who were banished. Here is the passage. "Our fathers having been brought to a true knowledge of the gospel and faith in it, deemed it their duty, both for the information of the other Reformed churches of Europe, and as a means of preventing the return of false doctrines among themselves, to draw up declarations of their belief. The Helvetic Confession of Faith was then published, and was approved by the churches of France, England, Holland, Poland, Scotland, Hungary, and Germany. *That confession remains in the midst of us*, an inestimable monument of the true and solid piety of our ancestors in general, and particularly of their spiritual guides; of their undisguised and sincere adoration of God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH, the plain and faithful expositions of truths which bring salvation to every one who believeth, IS PRESERVED IN FORM, but set aside in substance." These are sufficient to prove that the persecutors still give their assent to the Calvinistic confession of faith.

And, *finally*, who have been concerned in persecuting the unitarians at Geneva? Let this question be answered by one of their first divines.

These are the words of Professor Chenevière. "*We may number among the antagonists of the Geneva clergy, the pastors of Lausanne, who broke off all connexion with them. At their head was Dean Curtat, who took every opportunity of speaking and writing against the Genevans, with all his wonted violence.* He laughed at the attacks on his neighbours, which he beheld from the height of his *orthodoxy* as from an impregnable fort; he was ill able to conceal his joy, when he saw them insulted, nor did he show much repugnance to insulting them himself. This man, otherwise intelligent, well informed, and full of zeal, is violently prejudiced against Geneva; he would speak of that city in the words formerly used, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" This said Dean is the man whom the orthodox Dr. J. P. Smith acknowledged to "*hold the Deity of Christ.*" And these are the persecutors, both of the unitarians, and of their own more zealous Calvinistic brethren. I could produce an abundance of evidence in support of the questions stated; but I have quoted enough from orthodox writers of acknowledged credit to prove my five propositions. So that there remains no cause for doubt on this question. The persecutions have been carried on by one orthodox party against another which is a little more rigid and zealous. Very much like the war waged by Dr. Beecher and his New England friends against Dr. Beman and his New York friends, because they made use of more violent measures to get up their revivals. I feel constrained to aver, that if you had known any thing about the religious persecutions of Switzerland, you could not help knowing, that unitarianism had nothing whatever to do with them; that they have been perpetrated by those who believe the doctrine of the trinity; who preach the deity, atonement, and grace of Christ; who assent to the Calvinistic confession of faith; and who are called Presbyterians and Calvinists.

IX. Conscience.

Perhaps you will now aver, that you and the other leaders of your party have been actuated in all your measures by the dictates of your conscience. Sir, what is conscience? Is it a guide of conduct any farther than it coincides with the plain instructions of Jesus? Can we innocently follow, what we call its dictates, in opposition to the explicit injunctions of the gospel? If we may, the Bible is no sure guide of duty. If we may, the heathen may as well remain in ignorance of the Scriptures; for they already follow their conscience, and, on this ground, one conscience must be as good as another. What! Can we safely follow those suggestions of our minds which we call the dictates of conscience, in open disobedience to the plain precepts of revelation? Is not this a most dangerous principle? Will it not lead to the most abominable practices?

Will lead, did I say? Has it not lead thousands of professed Christians to commit the most unchristian deeds? What was the plea of

James and John for invoking fire from heaven on the opposers of their Master? Conscience. What was the plea of the beloved disciple for forbidding one who did not follow in his company to preach the gospel and work miracles? Conscience. What was the plea of the early converts for dividing into sects and calling themselves by the names of their favorite preachers? Conscience. What was the plea of the Catholic Church for erecting the holy inquisition and murdering thousands of believers who dissented from her creed? Conscience. What was the plea of Calvin for imprisoning and banishing Bolsec, and causing the death of Servetus? Conscience. What was the plea of our Pilgrim fathers for expelling the baptists, and hanging the witches, and killing the quakers? Conscience. And is it a sufficient excuse for such unrighteous deeds to say they were perpetrated in obedience to the dictates of conscience? Were the persons concerned exempt from all guilt because, their cruel barbarities were performed in compliance with the pretended sanctions of revealed religion?

And, Reverend Sir, permit me to ask you one fair question. Can you reconcile all the measures of the orthodox party with the plain commands of Jesus? I have not room to enter into many particulars. Try their proceedings by this one rule of our Saviour: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Now compare many of those actions which I have had occasion to introduce into this publication, with this divine direction. Can you aver, that the leaders of the orthodox party, in the use they make of human creeds; in their terms of ministerial intercourse; in their ecclesiastical tribunals; in their measures for establishing feeble churches; in their denunciations of unitarians; in their statements respecting the Reformers, Pilgrims, Catholics, Universalists; and in all their other measures for maintaining and propagating their religious faith; — can you honestly aver, that, in all these particulars, the leaders of your party have done towards unitarians as they would have had unitarians do towards themselves in exchange of circumstances? I put this question to your conscience. I ask you to answer it candidly, as in the presence of your final Judge. Place yourself in the situation of unitarians. Remember that they are entitled to equal rights and privileges with other men. Remember that they have as much at stake as other Christians, and have no more interest in embracing error than the orthodox. Remember that they are endowed with all the attributes of human nature; and that their only crime consists in obeying Jesus Christ according to the best of their judgment. If when you consider these things, you admit that the orthodox have not in all these instances obeyed the golden rule; then you confess that they have sometimes mistaken their will, their party spirit, their prejudice, the remains of their corrupt nature, for the dictates of a Christian conscience. But

if you contend that in all these things, they have strictly done unto others, as they would have others do unto them, then I must be permitted to thank my heavenly Father, that all Christians do not possess such a conscience. And on this principle, I know not why you may not adopt any measures which you can obtain power to execute.

But, Sir, before you recommend obedience to such an unhallowed principle, I beseech you to reflect seriously on the consequences. Sir, it is this plea of conscience for the commission of unchristian deeds, which has so sadly disgraced and so nearly ruined the Christian church in ages past. There is scarcely an article in the Christian code, which has not been violated by zealous Christians under this plea of conscience. I regard this as the fundamental error of Christendom at the present day. I consider this error as infinitely more detrimental to the cause of Christ, than the erroneous speculations of all the Christian errorists in the world. For it is a practical error. It strikes at the very foundation of Christianity. It destroys all confidence in revelation. It sets up the unsubdued inclinations of every fanatic or hypocrite as the inspired rule of duty. I fear this error is producing a blighting influence in your denomination, to say nothing of any others. I do hope, for the salvation of our common faith, that a reformation will immediately be effected in all denominations. I do hope the plain teachings of Jesus will be made the only standard of faith and practice by all who profess to be his followers. Nothing but this can ever produce a genuine revival of pure and undefiled religion. Nothing but this can ever secure union and harmony among Christians. Nothing but this can ever cause the glad tidings of the Gospel to be received by the unbelieving world.

X. Conclusion.

Reverend Sir,

My Letters on Religious Liberty are now finished. When I wrote my introduction, I firmly believed that a sufficient number of facts was at hand to establish my positions. But I had then no conception of the multitude of cases which have since come to my knowledge. If my statements and arguments make a one-hundredth part of the impression upon the minds of others, that the investigation of this subject has made upon my own, I shall be fully satisfied. For in such a case, the general conclusion of the public will be, that the following proposition has been perfectly demonstrated: The measures attempted and adopted by the leaders of the orthodox denomination, for the preservation and propagation of their peculiar views of religion, are subversive of free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism.

Should either you or any of your party be disposed to notice this publication in any form whatever, I hope you will remember *six* things in particular. I hope you will remember that the question at issue be-

tween yourself and unitarians is *not*, — Whether the orthodox frequently talk, and write, and preach, and publish about free inquiry, religious liberty, and the principles of congregationalism. Look at Goldsmith's Englishman within the walls of a prison. Because he was eternally vaporing about liberty, do you conclude that he enjoyed perfect freedom?

I hope you will also remember, that the question is *not*, — Whether the orthodox are sincere and conscientious in all their talking, and preaching, and praying, and publishing, and acting, in relation to unitarians. Who was ever more sincere and conscientious than Paul, when he persecuted the early converts, and consented to the death of the first Christian martyr? But does this convince you that such conduct was justifiable, because instigated by the dictates of a misguided conscience?

I hope you will likewise remember, that the question is *not*, — Whether one or a few of the many facts adduced in this publication may be disproved, or satisfactorily explained? This is indeed possible. For I have selected the cases recorded from a great variety of documents. I have aimed to take, not always the most striking, but those which could be most easily, readily, and conclusively proved by *legal* evidence. If, in stating so great a number, there should happen to be one or more, not so much to the purpose, or not so well attested, or not so true in all its details, it would be nothing strange; and would by no means weaken or destroy the general conclusion. I do not say this, because I suspect any thing of the kind; but because some of your writers are too apt to forget the rules of honorable controversy. If they can find one defective argument in one hundred, the ninety and nine which they cannot answer are neglected, and the unsound one is held up before the ignorant as a fair specimen of the writer's accuracy and reasoning.

I hope you will further remember, that the question is *not*, — Whether the unitarians are guilty of the same or more aggravated offences? For if you could prove the truth of every charge I have quoted from your writers; if you could make the world believe that they are totally depraved, wholly averse to all good, wholly inclined to all evil, very demons in human form, your object would not be accomplished. For all this would neither relieve you from the accusations preferred, nor lighten the burden of proof by which they are supported. I do not say this either, because I admit the justness of the orthodox denunciations; but because some of your writers are too apt to leave the real point at issue, when charged with illiberal and unchristian measures. I have no wish to justify any thing wrong in one party any more than in another. I have nothing to say for or against the unitarian denomination. My object has been to advance the evidence in support of my charges against the ORTHODOX LEADERS.

I hope moreover you will remember, that the question is *not*,— whether the writer of these letters is a mere boy, who has embraced heretical opinions? I can indeed lay no claim to grey hairs, and as to my religious sentiments, they have nothing to do with the subject. I have stated facts. For the truth and accuracy of these, the documents now in my possession, and the individuals who have furnished them, are responsible. I have spoken with great freedom. I have aimed to call things by their right names. The provocation demanded this. The times require this. Religion sanctions this. I have no ill will towards a single Christian of orthodox sentiments. I have no love for controversy. Orthodox usurpations have driven me, contrary to my wishes, my feelings, my early associations, my very nature, into the field of theological warfare. I am not the man to see my dearest rights wrested from me, and the precious truths of Jesus slandered, without an effort for their preservation. I undertook the present work of my own accord. I could find no one who thought your attack on unitarians worthy of an answer. I viewed the subject in a different light. I wished to aid the cause of religious liberty. I have sincerely endeavoured to write in a Christian spirit. I am a plain spoken man, and may have unconsciously offended. If I have uttered one unchristian expression, I heartily ask forgiveness. But if I am a young man and my opinions are unitarian, these circumstances should have no unfavorable effect on the merits of the present publication. I shall regard personal attacks, or sarcastic sneers, or cold ridicule, as no sufficient answer to my plain statements, and logical conclusions.

I hope you will remember finally, that the question, the *first* question at issue is this: *Are the principal statements in this publication substantially true?* You will not forget that the *second* is like unto the first: *Do these facts fully and fairly demonstrate the truth of the disputed proposition?* I have no personal claims on you for an answer to these questions. I have no intention of urging any so far as I am personally concerned. But I do think you stand pledged to the Christian public, either to *prove* that these statements are *false;* or to show their consistency with religious liberty, free inquiry, and the principles of congregationalism. I do think that you are under solemn obligations to the religious community, either to retract several of your declarations which these facts prove incorrect; or to establish their truth by more satisfactory evidence than your mere assertion. As one of this public I call upon you to pursue one or the other of these courses. I cannot find a more appropriate conclusion than is furnished in your own words.

"I could wish the call on you to do this had fallen into better hands than mine. But as the *unpleasant task* has not to my knowledge been undertaken, I have ventured upon it through a *sense of duty*. I can only appeal to the good sense, and equity, and candor of the community, for a justification of my course. If these condemn me, then let me stand

condemned. If not, then I shall at least have the satisfaction of believing, THAT WHAT I HAVE DONE MAY CONTRIBUTE TO BRING MORE INTO LIGHT, CERTAIN MATTERS, WHICH IT HAS NOW BECOME HIGH TIME THAT OUR COMMUNITY SHOULD MORE FULLY UNDERSTAND."

Yours respectfully,

BERNARD WHITMAN.

Waltham, December, 1830.

NOTE.

I WISH to make five remarks. *First*, I sincerely thank those individuals who have furnished me with facts for the present publication. *Secondly*, my only apology for not making more use of their communications is this; My pamphlet has already extended to four times the length I originally intended. *Thirdly*, I ask the favor to retain their manuscripts and printed documents in my possession, until I learn whether I shall have any further use for them. *Fourthly*, I would request all who may know of any orthodox measures subversive of religious liberty, to transmit to me an accurate account of the same, so that I may feel prepared for a new and enlarged edition. *Fifthly*, I intended to send by mail a copy of this work, to all who have been troubled with my request for aid in the undertaking; but I find the postage will amount to more than the price of the book. I therefore request all such to take advantage of the first private opportunity in sending either to me, or to my publishers, for a copy of the Letters on Religious Liberty.

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